United Nations S/PV.8298

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8298th meeting
Thursday, 28 June 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Polyanskiy	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Djédjé
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

The situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2018/541)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

18-20113 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Letter from Ms. Salamata Drame Tanoh-Boutchoue, addressed to the members of the Security Council

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to inform Council members that I have received a letter from Ms. Salamata Drame Tanoh-Boutchoue, spouse of the late Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire, His Excellency Mr. Bernard Tanoh-Boutchoue, addressed to all members of the Council. As the letter is written in French, I shall read it out in that language.

(*spoke in French*)

> "As you know, my husband, His Excellency Bernard Tanoh-Boutchoue, passed away on 18 April 2018. He was for each of you a colleague, a friend, a brother. From the announcement of his death until the departure of his remains to Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire, you have never tired in showing us your solidarity and your compassion. I thank you infinitely.
>
> "I would like to inform you that the funeral went well in Abidjan. With the support of the President of the Republic, His Excellency Alassane Ouattara, and the Ivorian Government, Bernard was accompanied with all honours to his final resting place on 26 May, 2018. He is now at rest in his native village, Grand Lahou, in the south of Côte d'Ivoire.
>
> "The children of Bernard — Charles, Thierry and Marie Fatimé — myself and our entire family in Côte d'Ivoire have been deeply touched by your marks of sympathy.
>
> "Before leaving New York, I wanted to express our deep gratitude and appreciation on behalf of the Tanoh-Boutchoue family.
>
> "You should know that Bernard had great admiration and consideration for each of you. I know that he would have liked to say to you: 'Look at the life I am starting and not that which I have finished, because I fought the good fight. I finished the race. I kept the faith'.
>
> "In closing, I would like to urge you to continue fighting the good fight for a more just world, a world of peace."

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2018/541)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2018/639, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/541, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, France, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2423 (2018).

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the vote.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I wish to begin by telling the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire how deeply moved I have been by the letter that has just been read out and how profoundly present our late colleague remains in our memory and our hearts. His wisdom, as reported by his spouse, is and will remain a source of inspiration to us.

France welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2423 (2018), renewing the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) for a period of one year.

Let us be blunt — this renewal is not like the previous ones. It is accompanied by a strong political message to the Malian parties that maintaining the current configuration of a mission as important and exposed as MINUSMA must necessarily be accompanied by substantial progress in the peace process. The resolution we have just adopted therefore sets out a precise list of priority measures — taken directly from the road map approved by the Malian parties — whose implementation will be followed with the greatest attention. It asks the Secretary-General to provide an update on that implementation in a specific report six months after the inauguration of the next President of Mali. It expresses the Council's intention to seek options for a possible significant adaptation of MINUSMA in the absence of substantial progress in the implementation of these priority measures. Lastly, it emphasizes that the non-implementation of the road map provisions by the announced deadline would also lead the Council to consider sanctions against those responsible for setting up those obstacles.

Everyone must therefore assume their responsibilities for creating conditions conducive to maintaining the exceptional level of international commitment enjoyed by Mali. That will be possible only with the urgent and unprecedented mobilization of the Malian parties for the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. The progress made in recent weeks is encouraging, but it must imperatively be continued and amplified.

In accordance with the recommendations of the Secretary-General and the conclusions of the strategic review, resolution 2423 (2018) provides MINUSMA with a clearer and more realistic mandate through greater prioritization of its tasks. It recognizes that the Mission is intended to interact with the other security presence deployed in the Malian theatre — the Malian armed forces, the Joint Force, of the Group of Five for the Sahel, the European missions and Operation Barkhane —whose actions are mutually reinforcing. It asks MINUSMA to better inform local actors about the characteristics and specificities of its mandate. It invites the Secretary-General to take further steps to strengthen the security of the Mission, which is our shared priority, while welcoming the progress made in recent months in implementing the recommendations of the report prepared by Lieutenant General (Retired) Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, entitled "Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers". Finally, it calls on MINUSMA and the Malian Government to take fully into account in their actions the security impacts of climate change and other environmental factors.

The text we have just adopted also expresses the Council's collective concern with regard to the ongoing deterioration of the situation in the centre and the threats it poses to the protection of civilians. It recalls that only a balanced approach, combining security response and development and governance efforts, can create the conditions for sustainable stabilization. It expresses serious concern about the allegations of human rights violations attributed to the Malian armed forces and notes with satisfaction the measures announced by the Malian authorities in this regard, while underlining the importance of their rapid and full implementation.

Finally, resolution 2243 (2018) recalls the need for future elections to be held in ways that guarantee the credibility of their results. It lends its full support to the good offices played by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in recent weeks, and calls for the continuation of a constructive dialogue between the Government and the opposition on all of these issues.

Before concluding, I wish to reaffirm here our unwavering support for the irreplaceable role played by the International Criminal Court in favour of peace and security in Mali. The conviction of the jihadist Al-Mahdi for attacks on the cultural and religious heritage of Timbuktu, as well as the forthcoming trial of Al Hassan Ag Abdoul Aziz Ag Mohamed Ag Mahmoud for crimes committed during the occupation of northern Mali by jihadist groups, testify to the concrete contribution of the Court to the fight against impunity in Mali. The resolution that we have adopted today calls on the Malian authorities to pursue their righteous cooperation with the Court, in accordance with their obligations under the Rome Statute. That is an absolutely essential point on the road to lasting stability in Mali.

Finally, I want to warmly thank all members of the Security Council for the open and constructive spirit they demonstrated throughout the negotiations. The unity that traditionally characterizes the Council on the Malian file is a major asset, enabling us to continue to play a decisive role in favour of peace and security in that country. We must do everything we can to maintain and make the most of it. That is the logic with which the resolution we adopted today is fully in line.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): The United States would like to thank France, the penholder, and all our Council colleagues for their collaboration in renewing one of the world's largest peacekeeping missions.

As Mali prepares for presidential elections in a few short weeks, the people of Mali find themselves at another significant crossroads. We have sought in resolution 2423 (2018) to find the best way to frame the role of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in Mali's present and future. Peacekeeping missions are not indefinite, nor should they be. This one, founded in 2013, which we have now renewed for another year, will not be in Mali forever. It is there to do one thing above all — to support the implementation of the 2015 Algiers Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali as a way to achieve durable and lasting political solutions there.

The Mission cannot achieve that alone. For years, various parties have stalled that process while the world has waited and the security situation has deteriorated. That is why this year's resolution makes clear to the parties that without significant progress on their part, we will be forced to look at options to overhaul the Mission. We agree that there has been some progress in implementing the accord over the past few months, but we should be much closer to full implementation, and we must see progress now. For the Council and Mali's many friends, who have made a significant financial and strategic investment in the country, the resolution makes it clear that we can accept no further delay.

With the resolution, we have also streamlined the mandate, emphasized the primacy of the Mission's political engagement, and stressed the importance of outreach and engagement for the protection of civilians. We have called on the Mission to develop better strategic messaging so that Malians understand that MINUSMA is there to bring peace and stability and to work with others in the development, security and political sectors to help Mali succeed.

Many Malians, and MINUSMA's peacekeepers, face life-and-death realities every day, contending with terrorist attacks, escalating intercommunal violence and — increasingly — human rights violations and abuses by Mali's security forces. The rising number of extrajudicial killings and mass graves in places like Boulikessi, Diourra, Koumaga, Nantaka and Ménaka must be reversed. Human rights violations and abuses by security forces only serve to fuel violence, instability and recruitment to terrorist organizations. In the resolution, the Council is united in declaring that respect for human rights and accountability are not optional. Violations by security forces have consequences.

I would like to note that in the twenty-second preambular paragraph and in paragraph 61, the resolution includes the words "in matters that are within its jurisdiction" in reference to the International Criminal Court (ICC). The United States interprets those words to mean in matters that are within the ICC's jurisdiction under international law. We note that Mali is a State party to the Rome Statute, has consented to ICC jurisdiction and has self-referred its situation to the ICC, pursuant to article 14 of the Rome Statute. As we have stated previously, the United States respects the decisions of those nations that have chosen to join the ICC, and in turn we expect that our decision not to join and not to place our citizens under the Court's jurisdiction will also be respected.

We look forward to successful elections, to the next President's full commitment to the peace accord, and to the parties' swift and significant progress towards its implementation. Their collective effort is the only way to achieve the political solutions that the people of Mali deserve on their way to a brighter future.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): We welcome the Council's unanimous adoption of resolution 2423 (2018), renewing the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) for another 12 months. We thank France, as the penholder, for facilitating the negotiations on the text, and we appreciate the flexibility and compromise of all members, which facilitated the resolution's unanimous adoption.

In spite of enormous challenges and constraints, MINUSMA peacekeepers are doing commendable work in supporting the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. We welcome the recent positive steps taken in the implementation of the Agreement ahead of the electoral cycle due to take place in Mali this year. We are confident that the Government of Mali and the Platform and Coordination armed groups will take all the steps necessary to fully and expeditiously deliver on their remaining obligations under the Agreement, as stipulated in the resolution that we just adopted.

We appreciate the continued support of MINUSMA, in cooperation with other international partners, to the efforts of the Malian authorities to combat terrorism and transnational organized crime, including information- and intelligence-sharing, planning, training and capacity-building. The role of MINUSMA continues to be vital, and the extension of its mandate for another 12 months, in line with the recommendations of the Secretary-General, is very welcome.

We have taken the right decision and, as we have always reiterated, the international community has a heavy responsibility to help Mali overcome its current security challenges. We all remember how Mali was an example of democratic governance in Africa before 2011. We are very hopeful that it will rise again.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation.

Russia supported the Council's adoption today of resolution 2423 (2018), which extends the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Our decision was based on the importance of maintaining consensus in the Security Council and on the understanding that in helping the Malian authorities to rectify the situation in the country, MINUSMA is carrying out a very important task. However, our agreement with the resolution does not mean that we are willing to subscribe to a number of its provisions. In particular, we oppose the use of the term "intelligence" in relation to the mandate of peacekeepers, based on the fact that the terminology should correspond exactly to the words of the report of the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/72/19).

We would like to draw the Council's attention to the resolution's provisions on climate and ecological issues. We believe that this issue, as it has always been, comes under the purview of the relevant bodies of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Let us not poach from them. Besides that, the Council has neither the mandate nor the necessary expertise to deal with such issues. Its main aim, as established in the Charter of the United Nations, is to examine issues that directly relate to peace and security. Unfortunately, our reasoning on this, which other delegations also talked about during the negotiations on the resolution, was not taken into consideration. This is therefore another de facto case of penholders abusing their rights. We believe that a note by the President of the Security Council aimed at a fair distribution of the relevant powers would be a good tool for rectifying this situation. The Russian delegation has circulated such a document and submitted it to the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8299

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Provisional

8299th meeting

Thursday, 28 June 2018, 10.35 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Polyanskiy	(Russian Federation)
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	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
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	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
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Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan (covering the period from 17 February to 3 June 2018) (S/2018/609)

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18-20222 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda.

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan (covering the period from 17 February to 3 June 2018) (S/2018/609)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of South Sudan to take part in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/609, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan, covering the period from 17 February to 3 June 2018.

I now give the floor to Ms. Keita.

Ms. Keita: I am grateful for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the situation in South Sudan and the ongoing peace process since the publication of the report of the Secretary-General on 14 June (S/2018/609).

Let me begin by condemning in the strongest possible terms the killing of a peacekeeper of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) earlier this week. Let there be no doubt that this is a war crime. In the coming days, we will engage all possible stakeholders to identify those who are responsible for heinous acts and expect the South Sudanese authorities to bring them to justice.

The security situation on the ground remains a serious concern with parties to the conflict in consistent breach of the cessation of hostilities agreement that they themselves pledged to honour. In the context of this fighting, UNMISS has documented gross violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, particularly in central and southern Unity. Reporting on security incidents and the situation on the ground is a mandated task of UNMISS, and the Mission uses various tools to report on them. However, a distinction must be made between incidents reported by UNMISS and the reports of the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism, which is mandated to verify ceasefire violations and then report on them.

Since the publishing of the Secretary-General's report on 14 June, UNMISS has recorded various security incidents. In Unity, between 5 and 6 June, the Transitional Government of National Unity and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in Opposition forces reportedly fought in Guar, Koch county, followed by attacks on Buok, Bieh, Leah, Lual, Botha and Padeah villages, in Leer, Mayendit and Koch counties. Reports of military attacks resumed on 12 June, with an alleged attack by Transitional Government of National Unity forces on Dablual, Mayendit county. Those were followed by further alleged attacks by Transitional Government of National Unity forces on Buaw, Koch county on 13 June and on the SPLM/A in Opposition positions in Mirmir, Ruol and Rubnor, Koch county, on 14 June.

During the alleged attacks from 12 to 14 June, a number of civilians were reportedly killed and injured, civilian homes burned, and cattle and food looted. Also on 14 June, two men in a pickup were reportedly killed by a rocket-propelled grenade fired at their vehicle near Malal, north of Koch. The weapon was allegedly fired by SPLA in Opposition forces in the area. On 18 June, Transitional Government of National Unity forces, accompanied by a tank, allegedly attacked SPLM/A in Opposition forces in the area of Pilling, Thonyor-Kuidak in Leer county. On the following day, Transitional Government of National Unity forces allegedly attacked Thonyor and Pilling. Fighting continued near Thonyor on 19 June, which reportedly resulted in civilian deaths and injuries.

On 17 June, in Western Equatoria, SPLM/A in Opposition forces reportedly attacked the SPLA barracks at Makpandu. Fighting was also reported between Transitional Government of National Unity and SPLM/A in Opposition forces at Wadhalelo in Jur River county and Ngobaggari in Wau county from 14 to 16 June. On 18 June, in Western Bahr el-Ghazal, UNMISS continued to receive information on ongoing attacks since 14 June on pro-Machar SPLA in Opposition positions in Baggari in Wau county

and Wadhalelo in Jur county by the SPLA. Allegedly, the SPLA now occupies both locations, which were formerly under control of the opposition.

On the same day, during an UNMISS patrol to Masna, in Wau county, ongoing fighting in Wadhalelo in Jur county was confirmed, as artillery and small fire arms were heard. On 20 June, UNMISS received information that, due to continued clashes between pro-Machar SPLA in Opposition and SPLA forces in Saura and Li-Rangu, 10 and 17 kilometres to the north of Yambio, Western Equatoria, respectively, many people from the Ndavuro. Makpara and Yabongo areas of Yambio fled to Yambio town. In addition, civilians from Ikpiro and Napere reportedly took refuge south of Yambio, in Masia and Kuze. On 23 June in Western Bahr el-Ghazal, UNMISS once again received reports of fighting between the SPLA and the pro-Machar SPLA in Opposition in areas near Wau. The SPLA reportedly deployed troops and military equipment, including tanks, into Baggari and Mboro. The fighting reportedly took place in Baggari, Wadhalelo, Mboro and Biringi, near Wau.

In the course of preparing the Secretary-General's report pursuant to resolution 2418 (2018), UNMISS requested the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism to share its verified reports. UNMISS received the Monitoring Mechanism reports on 26 June, which concluded that, since 1 June, there have been 11 verified incidents of fighting among parties and 12 other potential incidents that are under investigation. The Monitoring Mechanism report will be shared with the Council as an annex to the Secretary-General's upcoming report, and on July 5 Under-Secretary-General Lacroix will brief the Council thereon.

The continued fighting in South Sudan has had a direct impact on the humanitarian situation, in general, and food security, in particular, such as displacement from agricultural land and the destruction of food stocks; and an indirect impact, such as disruptions to food systems and markets and reduced water supply. The people of South Sudan are heavily suffering, as the country is rapidly approaching the peak hunger season of this year. Hunger and malnutrition have reached record levels, and 1.75 million people are on the brink of a catastrophe. By late July, more than 7 million people could be severely food insecure in the absence of sustained assistance and access, according to the latest food security analysis. It has been estimated that more than a million children under the age of five will be malnourished in 2018. That is a heavy and unfair price being paid by the most vulnerable members of society though no fault of their own. Moreover, in 2017, 30 aid workers were killed as a consequence of the conflict, and 7 have been killed since the beginning of this year.

The past two weeks have seen significant activity vis-à-vis the peace process led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). On 21 June, the IGAD Council of Ministers met to discuss the way forward, which led to the first face-to-face meeting between President Kiir and Mr. Machar in Addis Ababa. The same day, an Extraordinary Summit of IGAD Heads of State and Government was held, during which it was decided that the two leaders would meet again in Khartoum under the auspices of the Sudanese President Omer Al-Bashir to be followed two weeks later by another meeting hosted by President Kenyatta in Nairobi. The meeting in Khartoum took place on 25 June and was also attended by President Museveni of Uganda. In Khartoum, both President Kiir and Mr. Machar pledged to work for peace, and they have begun to discuss some of the contentious issues related to power-sharing and security arrangements.

On 27 June, President Salva Kiir Mayardit, Mr. Riek Machar Teny and representatives of the South Sudanese Opposition Alliance, SPLM "Former Detainees" and other political parties signed the Khartoum declaration of agreement among parties to the conflict of South Sudan. Although the Declaration broadly deals with all the contentious issues, further discussions are needed to iron out details to ensure that, this time, the parties implement the agreement under an effective implementation mechanism. Yesterday, the Secretary-General welcomed the signing of the declaration and urged all parties to demonstrate the political leadership required at this critical juncture of the peace process and commit to reaching agreement on the outstanding issues of governance and security arrangements in moving towards a fair, inclusive and implementable agreement.

The engagement by the regional leaders and face-to-face meetings between President Kiir and Mr. Machar are positive developments that must be supported and capitalized upon. However, peace in South Sudan will not be achieved or sustained merely based on a bilateral deal between the two leaders. While the outcome of regional and international efforts to deliver a political settlement remains unclear, I must reiterate that peace

will be sustained only if the revitalized agreement is inclusive and fair, addresses the root causes of the conflict and engages all stakeholders, including women and young people. In that regard, I wish to acknowledge the efforts exerted by the Office of the IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan to enhance the participation of women in the revitalization process.

Lastly, let me emphasize that the process will also require the constant support and engagement of the Security Council so that all stakeholders understand that a peaceful South Sudan will be supported by the international community, with consequences for those who continue to fuel the conflict.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Ms. Keita for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): We wish to thank Assistant Secretary-General Bintou Keita for her useful briefing. I express our appreciation to her for her commitment to carrying out her heavy responsibilities since she took over her Office.

The past couple of weeks have witnessed intensive engagement on South Sudan within the framework of the high-level revitalization process, and there is indeed positive momentum in that regard. The Council of Ministers of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the IGAD Special Envoy have been actively involved in shuttle diplomacy to engage the parties on some of the most important and outstanding issues related to security and governance. IGAD has made efforts to facilitate those discussions by presenting a bridging proposal.

In that connection, issues were left for the principals to meet face-to-face and iron out their differences. The Addis Ababa meeting between President Salva Kiir and Mr. Riek Machar, under the auspices of my Prime Minister as the Chair of IGAD, provided such an opportunity after two years. Even though no breakthrough was achieved, the fact that the two met to discuss issues face to face was a step in the right direction. We believe that the Assistant Secretary-General is right in recognizing the importance of that development.

All of us saw the outcome of the thirty-second IGAD Extraordinary Summit, held last week, which basically laid out the steps that need to be taken over the coming days to move the peace process forward. In that context, we very much welcome the outcome of the second face-to-face meeting between President Kiir and Mr. Machar in Khartoum, under the auspices of President Omer Al-Bashir and in the presence of President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of Uganda, on the basis of the decision adopted by the IGAD Summit.

We commend the two leaders for signing the declaration of principles and hope that will facilitate the resolution of some of the outstanding issues and pave the way for the finalization of the IGAD bridging proposal. In that regard, we welcome the statement issued by the Secretary-General yesterday (SG/SM/19114). We hope the Security Council will send the right signal to the parties, encouraging them to stay the course and reach an agreement to end the suffering of the South Sudanese people. That message was also reinforced today by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, M Moussa Faki Mahamat.

The coming days will be very critical. The two leaders are expected to meet again in Nairobi, with the facilitation of President Uhuru Kenyatta. We hope the Nairobi meeting will build on the momentum generated in Addis Ababa and Khartoum to facilitate the successful conclusion of the peace process.

In order to take advantage of the African Union (AU) Summit in Nouakchott, important meetings by IGAD and AU are going to take place on the margins. We hope those meetings will give the peace process a final push. It is against that backdrop that we are meeting today. The Council should put its weight behind those efforts.

We know there has been a lot of frustration over the South Sudanese peace process because of so many twists and turns. We all know that there are issues that need further clarification, and we are not there yet in terms of achieving a final settlement. Nevertheless, we cannot afford to lose hope for peace. We can only encourage what little gain has been made and seize the momentum that has been generated recently to push the parties to make the necessary compromise and conclude the peace process. As the Secretary-General indicated in yesterday's statement, it is critical for IGAD, the African Union and the United Nations to work together at this critical juncture in the peace process.

Nevertheless, we remain concerned by the overall security situation. That was adequately covered by the

Assistant Secretary-General. That is why we welcome the declaration of a permanent ceasefire by the parties in Khartoum, which will enter into force within 72 hours. What matters now, of course, is that the parties honour that commitment and implement the ceasefire. IGAD has strongly condemned the repeated violations of the cessation of hostilities agreement and has decided that the Sudan and Kenya should further investigate the reports of violations and submit to the next IGAD Summit the appropriate targeted punitive measures to be taken.

We also note that the humanitarian situation remains dire. It is vital that all parties ensure safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to allow humanitarian actors on the ground to reach those in need of urgent assistance.

The role of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) continues to be very important. We are grateful to the civilian and military personnel of the Mission for their dedication and commitment in carrying out their mandate. We also commend the efforts made in ensuring adequate conditions for the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need.

We support the statement issued by the Council yesterday (SC/13399) and join the Assistant Secretary-General in strongly condemning the attack on the UNMISS convoy, which claimed the life of a Bangladeshi peacekeeper. That is unacceptable and we hope the Government will undertake the necessary investigation to hold those who committed that crime to account.

Finally, with regard to the Regional Protection Force , the Ethiopian infantry battalion is now being fully deployed and the arrival of the troops and the equipment will be complete before the end of this month.

Mr. Esono Mbengono (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me, at the outset, to express my gratitude to Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for her arduous work in discharging her duties and for her excellent presentation today of the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan (S/2018/609).

The Government of Equatorial Guinea wishes to once again commend the tireless work and efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to bring together the opposing parties for a direct and constructive dialogue on peace and stability in South Sudan.

Approximately one month ago (see S/PV.8273), the Chamber bore witness to the existing divergence with regard to the situation in South Sudan. The differences consisted in disagreement on how to proceed, but we all had the same goal in mind — for all parties to respect the ceasefire and to return to the negotiating table. Today we can say with a high degree of optimism and certain satisfaction that the goal has been reached. That is why all delegations here today are to be congratulated, since our success is due, in part, to the attention we devoted to this issue and the pressure the Council brought to bear.

Equatorial Guinea has closely followed the high-level diplomacy that, over the course of last month, has facilitated face-to-face meetings between President Salva Kiir and Mr. Riek Machar, which have culminated in yesterday's signing of a joint agreement that establishes a permanent ceasefire and sets forth new commitments in some of the most contentious areas. We cannot but commend those actions, which are undeniably decisive steps in the right direction. Nevertheless, we remain cautiously optimistic, since it is not the first time that the parties come to agreements only to violate them later. We therefore call upon the sense of responsibility of the opposing leaders and remind them that this is a historic opportunity for their people and the international community. We trust that they will rise to the occasion.

Moreover, Equatorial Guinea is quite concerned about the contents of the latest reports and briefings on the situation in South Sudan. We emphatically condemn the attacks on UNMISS forces on 4 June in the city of Leer, the recent cowardly attack in Central Equatoria province that killed a noble Bangladeshi soldier and all other attacks mentioned by Ms. Keita. We reiterate that such crimes must not go unpunished.

Additionally, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations presented a fact sheet on violations of the UNMISS status-of-forces agreement, pursuant to which, inter alia, the parties committed to taking all appropriate measures to ensure the security and freedom of movement of UNMISS, its members, associated personnel and property and assets.

In the light of that, we must respectfully remind all parties concerned that, in addition to seeking peace, they are obligated to alleviate the humanitarian needs of the population. That obligation can be met

only by facilitating humanitarian operations and only when the threats and risks that humanitarian assistance organizations and their brave personnel face are eliminated.

The Government of Equatorial Guinea calls on the Government of South Sudan to continue with its usual collaboration with UNMISS, IGAD and the African Union so that together they can reach the ultimate objective of bringing peace and stability to the people of South Sudan, who truly deserve it. We also welcome the joint statement by the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union on the successful signing of the agreement we mentioned earlier. We are certain that the issue will be dealt with on the sidelines of the African Union Summit that is currently under way in Nouakchott.

Allow me to emphasize something that we have often said in our statements on this agenda item. Despite the most recent developments, it must be reiterated that now more than ever it is important that the parties to the conflict refrain from any actions that could aggravate the situation and take clear steps towards implementing the agreement signed in December 2017. That involves an end to the hostilities, the protection of civilians, access for humanitarian aid and an immediate return to the negotiating table in order to address in detail the outstanding issues.

In conclusion, we reiterate the delight of my Government regarding the positive and encouraging news coming from that young and sisterly nation, which we wish and expect to have a great future despite the fact that they must work hard, learning from past lessons. We are also grateful to the parties, in particular the regional leaders President Kenyatta of Kenya, President Omer Al-Bashir of the Sudan and President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, for acting and for the efforts of former President of Mali Alpha Oumar Konaré and his contribution. They made it possible to begin this new chapter. We call on them to continue to work with great dedication in order to safeguard that small but great victory.

Finally, and no less important, we applaud the release of the 10 humanitarian workers who were kidnapped on 25 April in the vicinity of the town of Yei. They have been transported to Juba safe and sound.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for presenting the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan (S/2018/602).

With regard to the latest developments in the political arena, we highlight the rapprochement between President Salva Kiir and Mr. Riek Machar. The recent meetings of the two leaders give hope to a people that has been devastated by the conflict. Bolivia commends the agreement that establishes a permanent ceasefire, which should take effect in the coming hours. We call for its implementation, and we hope that the parties demonstrate a real commitment to peace and stability in South Sudan.

The Khartoum agreement between the parties to the South Sudan conflict addresses crucial elements, such as the opening of humanitarian corridors, the withdrawal of troops, the separation of forces and the release of political prisoners, in addition to a 39-month transition period in order to call national elections, which need to be implemented promptly. On that last point we welcome the fact that an agreement that gives a reasonable time for the adequate preparation of such elections has been reached.

However, despite those positive developments, it is a reality that the situation in South Sudan remains one of the most critical. The deterioration of the security situation and the country's complex economic position further aggravate the humanitarian crisis, which is increasingly difficult to manage and affects more than half of the South Sudanese population. The reports from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs show that there are 7 million people who require humanitarian assistance and millions of internally displaced persons and refugees in neighbouring countries facing a lack of basic services and serious food insecurity.

In addition to that, South Sudan has become one of the most dangerous places for humanitarian workers. We strongly condemn the attack against the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) on 26 June, which resulted in the death of a member of the Mission. We express our condolences to his family. We call on the parties to respect international humanitarian law, as well as to ensure an optimal operational environment for UNMISS.

Likewise, we commend the efforts of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), together with UNMISS, in the clearing and destruction of explosive

devices. That work will contribute to resettling the displaced persons and to creating conditions favourable to the provision of humanitarian assistance. We regret the death of an UNMAS staff member while carrying out his work. In the same way, we express our condolences to his family.

Given such a complex outlook, we are aware that it is very difficult to find immediate solutions. However, the Khartoum agreement represents a response to the current situation. In any case, progress cannot remain as only an intention. We once again reiterate that leadership and political will are necessary for the full implementation of those agreements.

At the same time, this is an appropriate opportunity to commend the work of regional organizations, the effort and commitment of both the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union, which, through constant mediation between the parties and the Revitalization Forum, achieved an inclusive dialogue and brought the parties to starting talks about their main differences.

Likewise, based on the reports of the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism, we encourage regional organizations to take measures against those that hinder the peace process and do not implement the agreements achieved.

To conclude, we express our gratitude to the members of UNMISS and to the entire United Nations team for their commitment to the South Sudanese people and for the work that they undertake in such a difficult and complex security environment.

Mr. Tenya (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We appreciate the convening of this meeting and the valuable information provided today by Assistant Secretary-General Bintou Keita.

Peru notes with expectation the direct dialogue between President Salva Kiir and Mr. Riek Machar. We welcome the declaration of the Khartoum agreement between the parties to the conflict in South Sudan, signed yesterday, which we hope will lead the country towards sustainable peace.

We trust that the next rounds of talks will make it possible to resolve issues of the governance and security of the country and to reach an agreement on the proposal of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) with regard to such pending issues. We would like to acknowledge the important role of IGAD, through its High-Level Revitalization Forum, as well as that of the United Nations, the African Union and various leaders of the region, in facilitating the dialogue between the Sudanese parties. We wish to encourage them to persevere in their efforts to achieve an inclusive, transparent and viable agreement.

We emphasize the importance of regional and international support and assistance to ensure that, this time, the peace commitments are fully respected and implemented for the benefit of a population that faces one of the most serious humanitarian crises currently. In the immediate future, that implies observation of the permanent ceasefire, the opening of humanitarian corridors and the release of prisoners of war and political detainees.

We must recall that the conflict in South Sudan has forced the displacement of more than 4 million people and that an estimated 7 million will face serious food insecurity in the coming months. For it to last, peace must allow for their urgent needs to be met and provide them with a future of development. To that end, we must express our concern about the serious difficulties that humanitarian assistance faces in reaching the population. The most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/609) describes fatal attacks, arrests, bureaucratic interference, undue charges and the intimidation and harassment of humanitarian workers. All that must stop.

We want to acknowledge the dedicated work of the humanitarian organizations and their workers. We deeply regret the death of a Bangladeshi Blue Helmet due to the attack on a humanitarian convoy this week. The fact must be investigated and those responsible must be brought to justice.

We commend the United Nations Mission in South Sudan on its efforts to protect civilians. We highlight the initiative undertaken with the United Nations Development Programme to establish a specialized unit to protect the rights of women and children and to develop an action plan to prevent, mitigate and respond to conflict-related cases of sexual violence. We are concerned in particular about the considerable increase in the number of human rights abuses and violations and breaches of international humanitarian law in recent months, as negotiations took place to revitalize the peace process.

In conclusion, we underscore that we cannot remain indifferent to the deaths of 383 civilians — including

elderly people, persons with disabilities and children — and conflict-related sexual violence, which has affected 278 women and girls. Such horrendous crimes must be stopped and those responsible must face justice.

Mr. Tumysh (Kazakhstan): I join previous speakers in thanking Assistant Secretary-General Bintou Keita for her comprehensive update on the situation in South Sudan, as well as her tireless efforts and those of her able team to bring about peace in Africa. Allow me to make the following observations and recommendations.

Like other delegations, Kazakhstan welcomes the signing of the Khartoum declaration of agreement by the parties to the conflict. We highly commend the concerted efforts of the United Nations, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), as well as the mediation efforts of the leadership of the Sudan and Uganda, which helped secure the peace deal. However, much remains to be done to achieve lasting peace and stability in South Sudan. The conflict has ruined the economy and millions of people have fled their homes in order to survive. Military action has intensified ahead of the rainy season and there is widespread violence against civilians. Aid workers and the personnel of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) have remained but the humanitarian aid operation remains disrupted and nearly half of the population suffers from starvation and malnutrition.

Against that backdrop, Kazakhstan hopes that the peace agreement will help build trust between the South Sudanese parties and prevent further escalation of the humanitarian and economic crisis in South Sudan. We are pleased to hear that President Kiir and Mr. Machar have respectfully committed to implementing the agreement. We expect that their words will become deeds.

We look forward to the cessation of all hostilities and to the facilitation of humanitarian access and expect that the parties will strictly adhere to international law, including international humanitarian law, international human rights law and refugee law. We also expect that a revised bridging proposal will be concluded by the end of the current Khartoum talks. We also believe that political negotiations should take place in parallel with intercommunal reconciliation and confidence-building among local populations, as well comprehensive strategies in economic development and resilience-building, with the full engagement of women and youth.

With regard to the upcoming negotiations on the renewal of the South Sudan sanctions regime, we look forward to receiving the report of the Secretary-General requested in resolution 2418 (2018). We reiterate that the position of countries of the region and regional organizations, namely, IGAD and the African Union, should be taken into account in the Council's deliberations on any additional measures. It is of critical importance that the Council remain united in support of IGAD and African Union efforts.

In conclusion, we strongly condemn the recent attack on UNMISS, which resulted in the killing of a Bangladeshi peacekeeper. We express our deepest condolences to his family and to the people and the Government of Bangladesh and call on the Government of South Sudan to investigate the attack.

I conclude by thanking UNMISS for implementing its mandated tasks under very difficult circumstances and by commending the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan, Mr. Shearer, and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and South Sudan, Mr. Haysom, on their tireless efforts and commitment to seeking a solution to the crisis in the country.

Mr. Djédjé (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Ms. Bintou Keita for her excellent briefing.

First of all, I would like to firmly condemn the cowardly attack on a convoy of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) on 26 June, which resulted in the death of Bangladeshi soldier, and extend condolences to the family of the victim and to the Government of Bangladesh.

My country remains deeply concerned about the security situation in South Sudan five years after the start of the conflict. Despite the cessation of hostilities agreement signed by the parties to the conflict on 21 December 2017, clashes continue in several regions of the country, leading to loss of life and the displacement of many civilians. My country strongly condemns violations of the cessation of hostilities agreement and again calls on the parties to the conflict to honour their commitments and end the clashes. My delegation is also concerned about the ongoing inter-ethnic violence and welcomes the civilian disarmament initiative adopted

by the Government of South Sudan. Côte d'Ivoire encourages the Government to redouble its efforts to ensure the security and well-being of the population.

My country remains convinced that lasting peace will not be achieved in South Sudan without a political solution negotiated by the parties to the conflict. We welcome the efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union and UNMISS to encourage the parties to the conflict to resume negotiations towards a lasting and inclusive political settlement to the crisis. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the diplomatic efforts of the Ethiopian Prime Minister, which led to the meeting between President Salva Kiir and former First Vice-President Riek Machar, held in Addis Ababa on 20 June. We welcome the fact that mediation efforts by the Sudanese President led to the signing by the parties in Khartoum on 27 June of a declaration of agreement, in which they commit to implementing a permanent ceasefire and to continuing discussions to reach an agreement on power-sharing and security arrangements. Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the good offices of the leaders of IGAD member States and reaffirms that it is up to the parties to the South Sudanese conflict to honour the commitments made through the signing of the declaration, which constitutes a decisive step in the quest for peace in South Sudan. In that regard, Côte d'Ivoire supports the deployment of an IGAD-African Union contingent tasked with enforcing the permanent cessation hostilities agreement, as mentioned in the agreement.

The fragile nature of the humanitarian situation in South Sudan remains a source of concern for the international community. With approximately 2.5 million refugees and 1.8 million internally displaced persons, it is one of the most serious humanitarian situations in the world. Humanitarian organization estimates of more than 7 million people who are food insecure and more than 1 million children at risk for malnutrition serve to underscore the urgent need for increased humanitarian assistance to South Sudan. Côte d'Ivoire thanks humanitarian organizations for their considerable efforts to help people in need and strongly condemns the recurring attacks on humanitarian workers. We urge the parties to the conflict in South Sudan to guarantee the safety of humanitarian workers, remove the obstacles to humanitarian assistance and enable humanitarian access to the population, in line with the 21 December 2017 agreement.

The human rights situation also remains a source of concern, in particular because of acts of sexual violence committed against women and the use of child soldiers by the parties to the conflict. My delegation therefore calls for the urgent establishment of transitional justice institutions, such as a hybrid court for South Sudan, which will be an effective tool for protecting human rights and combating impunity.

My country would like to congratulate UNMISS on its excellent work in discharging its mandate in a particularly challenging environment. We underscore our support for the Mission and urge it to continue its work, specifically to protect civilians and human rights. My country therefore urges the Government to respect the status-of-forces agreement, which remains the legal framework for cooperation between the Government and the United Nations Mission with a view to restoring peace and stability in South Sudan.

In conclusion, the latest political developments give us hope that lasting peace is possible in South Sudan. However, it remains dependent upon the political will of the South Sudanese leaders and their robust ownership of the process of exiting the crisis, as well as on the regional support provided by IGAD and the African Union. In that regard, my country calls on the United Nations to support the current momentum and all the efforts of the countries involved.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mr. Malwal (South Sudan): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your presidency of the Security Council for the month of June and for your wise leadership during your tenure. We would also like express our wish that the host country win the World Cup in a few days' time. I would also like to acknowledge and welcome the presence of Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

On Tuesday, 26 June we heard the sad news that Lieutenant Commander Ashraf Siddiqui, a Bangladeshi peacekeeping officer protecting a humanitarian convoy in Yei area, had been killed. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt condolences to the family of the officer, the Government and the people of Bangladesh and the United Nations family at large. The Government of the Republic of South Sudan will cooperate with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan to see to it that those

who committed this crime are identified and brought to account.

Last month, the Security Council adopted resolution 2418 (2018), which, at the time, we thought unwise and premature because the peace negotiations led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) were in progress and that peace process should be given every chance to succeed. We stated last month that there was light at the end of the peace tunnel.

Today we are happy to report that the light is much brighter than it was last month. We are delighted to report to the Security Council that there was positive news from Khartoum yesterday, namely, that the warring parties — not a just bilateral arrangement between Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, but all the warring parties in South Sudan — had signed a peace declaration in which they have all pledged to work together to bring peace to the people of South Sudan. While the document signed is a framework for peace, we are hopeful and very optimistic that a final peace agreement will be concluded in the very near future. At this juncture, I would like to announce that, in the next few hours, President Salva Kiir will decree a comprehensive ceasefire all over South Sudan.

In the meantime, we would like to appeal to the Council and, through it, to other international actors and entities concerned with the situation in South Sudan to give the IGAD peace process currently and earnestly under way in Khartoum their full support. The Security Council must be seen as fully supporting the peace process for South Sudan, not just eager to dole out blame and punishment whenever there is a setback in the process of peacemaking.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the IGAD leaders and the members of the Security Council for going the extra mile to give peace a chance in South Sudan. Their patience and perseverance will soon be duly rewarded by an agreement that will be acceptable and implementable.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8300

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8300th meeting
Friday, 29 June 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Polyanskiy	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mrs. Córdova Soria
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Dah
	Equatorial Guinea	Mrs. Mele Colifa
	Ethiopia	Mr. Gebrehiwot
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Ms. Van Baak
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Mr. Lewicki
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Clay
	United States of America	Ms. Eckels-Currie

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Letter dated 20 May 2018 from the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/531)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

18-20260 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Letter dated 20 May 2018 from the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/531)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2018/643, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/531, which contains the text of a letter dated 20 May 2018 from the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Côted'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, France, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2424 (2018).

The meeting rose at 10.10 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8301

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8301st meeting

Friday, 29 June 2018, 10.10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Polyanskiy	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mrs. Córdova Soria
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Djédjé
	Equatorial Guinea	Mrs. Mele Colifa
	Ethiopia	Mr. Gebrehiwot
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Ms. Van Baak
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Mr. Lewicki
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Clay
	United States of America	Ms. Eckels-Currie

Agenda

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its eleventh session (S/2018/83)

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18-20266 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Report of the peacebuilding Commission on its eleventh session (S/2018/83)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: His Excellency Mr. Cho Tae-yul, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, in his capacity as former Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, and His Excellency Mr. Ion Jinga, Permanent Representative of Romania, in his capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/83, which contains the report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its eleventh session.

I now give the floor to Mr. Cho Tae-yul.

Mr. Cho Tae-yul: I thank you, Mr. President, for inviting me to the Security Council, in my capacity as former Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, to present the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) on its eleventh session (S/2018/83).

Since the adoption of the twin resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture in 2016 (resolutions 2282 (2016) and Generaal Assembly resolution 70/262) and the Secretary-General's strong commitment to peacebuilding and sustaining peace, the political momentum for improving the activity of the Peacebuilding Commission has been growing. Taking advantage of that hard-won momentum, the Commission continued to work hard in the past year to use its convening role to mobilize relevant stakeholders within and outside the United Nations and to assist countries and regions, in line with its mandate in pursuing their peacebuilding priorities, by way of an integrated, strategic and coherent approach to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. I would like to highlight some of the achievements made in the past year.

First, as an advisory body to the Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission continued to make efforts to improve the quality of its advice to enrich the Council's deliberations, when requested. For that reason, the interaction and dynamics between the PBC and the Council seemed to improve, as the Council recognized the importance of the convening role of the Commission last year on a number of regional and country-specific issues, including the Sahel region, the Central African Republic, Liberia and Guinea-Bissau. Such requests provided an opportunity for the Commission to show that, given its role of convening diverse actors, including host Governments, United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, civil society and, where relevant, private sector actors, it can provide comprehensive advice to the Council. For instance, in the case of Burundi, the Commission presented to the Council the socioeconomic dimensions of the country, while maintaining a channel of communication with the Burundian Government. As for Liberia, the Commission helped to develop a peacebuilding plan for the country in preparation for the transition ahead of the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in Liberia.

On the Sahel, the Council emphasised the importance of the Commission's convening role to mobilize relevant stakeholders in collaboration with the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, with a view to advancing the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. To that end, the Commission held several meetings on the Sahel last year and engaged with the African Union High Representative for Mali and the Sahel, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, the Permanent Secretary of the Group of Five for the Sahel, the European Union Special Representative for the Sahel and the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, among others. An informal interactive dialogue with the Council was also held to discuss the regional peacebuilding challenges in the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin. In my capacity as Chair of the PBC, I attended the meeting in Chad of the Ministerial Coordination Platform for the Sahel, to identify ways by which the PBC can support the efforts of the countries in the Sahel in making progress towards development and stability, the results of which I shared with the Council last year (see S/PV.7976).

The PBC also held a joint meeting with the Economic and Social Council to focus on the social and economic dimensions of the Sahel's multidimensional challenges. That was also an attempt by the PBC to play

its bridging role among the relevant intergovernmental United Nations principal organs and to pursue an integrated and coherent approach to peacebuilding and sustaining peace within its mandate.

Secondly, in addition to the good work of the existing country-specific configurations, the Commission expanded its work by considering, in the Organizational Committee, other countries and regions. Most notably, the PBC started to assist the Gambia, upon its request, at a critical time of transition by sustaining international attention and supporting the country, which was not on the Commission's formal agenda, after the Security Council stopped deliberations on its situation. After visiting the Gambia with the Assistant Secretary-General of the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Permanent Representative of the Gambia, I convened a series of meetings on the country with PBC members and senior officials from the United Nations, international financial institutions and civil society to discuss the peacebuilding priorities of the Gambia, with the Gambian national authorities clearly in the driver's seat.

The Commission also for the first time deliberated on Solomon Islands, Colombia and Sri Lanka, upon their request. After becoming eligible to receive resources from the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), those countries came to the PBC to discuss their peacebuilding priorities. The meetings illustrated how countries eligible for the PBF can use the PBC as a platform for securing global political support for their peacebuilding priorities.

The PBC has also been increasingly taking on a regional approach, as the challenges faced by certain countries are intertwined with those of other countries in the region, making it increasingly important to address the issues with a regional, cross-border approach. As I mentioned earlier, last year we discussed the Sahel region, at the request of the Security Council, as well as the Great Lakes region, with the consent of the countries concerned.

To better assist countries in building and sustaining peace, the Commission has also been strengthening its partnerships with key stakeholders within and outside of the United Nations, such as international financial institutions, regional organizations, civil society and, where relevant, the private sector. For instance, in June last year, I led a delegation of PBC members to the World Bank, where we met with the President and other senior officials of the Bank and members of the Executive Board to discuss ways to assist the countries and regions considered by the PBC. The PBC and World Bank later issued a joint statement on holding a meeting on an annual basis, and the Commission should make use of such annual meetings to help mobilize resources for the countries supported by the PBC.

In December, I also led a delegation of the Commission to Addis Ababa to discuss ways to reinforce cooperation between the Commission and the African Union. Given that regional organizations and subregional organizations are increasingly playing a leading role in building and sustaining peace in their respective regions, the Commission will continue to strengthen its partnerships with those organizations so as to gain a better understanding of the situation on the ground, while enhancing the coherence and coordination of international efforts in order to assist countries with their peacebuilding priorities.

The convening role of the PBC has also created space to engage with civil society organizations. Last year, in the discussions on Colombia, Solomon Islands and Sri Lanka, local civil society representatives contributed to the Commission's deliberations by sharing their views on what peacebuilding and sustaining peace mean in practice.

Before I conclude my remarks, I wish to make a couple of points on how the Peacebuilding Commission can work more closely with the Security Council.

First, the Commission's efforts to advise the Council can be more effective if its work is coordinated with the activities of the Council. For that reason, the Commission should continue to align its work with the Council's calendar and engage with the relevant actors to gather diverse perspectives in the months preceding the relevant Council meetings.

Secondly, the Security Council and the PBC can consider working more closely during and following transitions, especially in the transition related to the withdrawal of a peacekeeping operation. The PBC could also look at a country situation that is coming off the Council's agenda, at the request of the country. The Commission can help to maintain the international community's support, while assisting the country's efforts to maintain stability and build and sustain peace by helping to implement its peacebuilding plans, mobilize resources and promote coordination and coherence of international assistance.

I would like to conclude by congratulating Ambassador Jinga, Permanent Representative of Romania and current Chair of the PBC, for the excellent work done so far, and by thanking the Peacebuilding Support Office for its dedicated support to the Commission. The Republic of Korea, in its capacity as Vice-Chair of the Commission this year, remains committed to fully supporting the Peacebuilding Commission.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Cho Tae-yul for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Jinga.

Mr. Jinga: At the outset, I wish to congratulate the Republic of Korea, and Ambassador Cho Tae-yul in particular, for the excellent work he did as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in 2017. As we have just heard, under the leadership of the Republic of Korea the Commission made good progress in enhancing the effectiveness of the Peacebuilding Commission and in improving its advisory role to the Security Council. I wish to focus my intervention on what the Commission has been doing this year to continue on that positive track.

The Sahel region is a clear priority for our work region. As was just mentioned by my predecessor, last year the Security Council emphasized the importance of the convening role of the PBC in mobilizing deeper commitment and partnership among the United Nations, the countries of Sahel and other international and regional partners, with a view to advancing the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel. In March I attended the sixth meeting of the Ministerial Coordination Platform for the Sahel in Chad. The meeting stressed the need for a holistic approach to address the multidimensional threats facing the countries of the Sahel region and their people and called on regional and international partners to act with greater synergy and unity of purpose.

To further that objective, the Commission's annual session, which is scheduled to take place in the fall this year, will focus exclusively on the Sahel. The PBC will bring together Member States, representatives of countries of the Sahel, senior officials of the United Nations, including the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General, and representatives of regional organizations, international financial institutions and civil society organizations. The purpose of that important event will be to discuss ways of mobilizing deeper commitments and partnerships in support of efforts to build and sustain peace in the Sahel under the umbrella of the updated Integrated Strategy for the Sahel that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, Mr. Chambas, will present in July.

The annual session is a good example of how the convening role of the PBC can improve its advisory role. It is through its engagement with all the relevant stakeholders to discuss broad peacebuilding issues that the PBC can provide comprehensive advice to the relevant United Nations bodies and support their deliberations. To do that in an effective way, the Commission will further enhance its working methods and strengthen cooperation with key partners. With regard to the advisory role of the PBC to the Council, most important — and I wish to support a point raised earlier by my predecessor — the Commission must better time its calendar of work based on the activities of the Security Council. Early preparation is key if we wish to provide strategic advice to the Council, if requested, when possibl a couple of weeks ahead of Security Council meetings on specific issues. At the same time, the PBC must submit advice to the Security that would complement advice the Council receives from other sources.

The Commission is also working towards further strengthening its relationship with the African Union. On 18 July, on the margins of the Security Council meeting with the African Union Peace and Security Council, the PBC will convene a joint event with the Peace and Security Council to explore opportunities for collaboration.

Its engagement with the Gambia is another important area of work for the Commission. Upon the request of the Government of the Gambia, the PBC continues to provide a forum for the country to engage with the international community. Two months ago we convened a high-level meeting, chaired by the State Secretary of Romania, as Chair of the PBC, which was attended by the President and the Minister of Finance of the Gambia, the European Union Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, the President of the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States, the Permanent Observer of the African Union, as well as senior officials of the Department of Political

Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme and the Peacebuilding Support Office. The meeting provided an opportunity for the Gambia to present its peacebuilding priorities ahead of the successful International Conference for the Gambia, which took place in Brussels last May, and demonstrated once again the convening role of the Peacebuilding Commission.

In addition, the existing country-specific configurations — for Burundi, the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone — continue to do important work in support of longer-term peacebuilding and sustaining peace strategies. At the beginning of this week, the PBC held a substantive meeting at which we heard reports from the Chairs of the country-specific configurations and a briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support on progress in enhancing synergies between PBC and Peacebuilding Fund.

Lastly, I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing the informal interactive dialogue that will take place today. A discussion on the advisory role that the PBC can play when the Council is considering the formulation, review or drawdown of peacekeeping operations and special political mission mandates is very timely and important. I look forward to a fruitful discussion and to further strengthening the relationship between Council and Commission.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Jinga for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mrs. Mele Colifa (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): We sincerely thank His Excellency Mr. Ion Jinga, Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations and current Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, and His Excellency Mr. Cho Tae-yul, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations and former Chair of the Commission, for today's informative briefings on the work of the Peacebuilding Commission in 2017.

I shall deliver my statement on behalf of the three African Member States on the Security Council — Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire and Equatorial Guinea.

Our group congratulates the Peacebuilding Commission on its consistent efforts to maintain peace and security, while always respecting the sovereignty of countries. As experience in our brother countries of Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and other African countries has shown, supporting the sovereignty of countries is the cornerstone of peacebuilding. Such support is crucial in order to ensure an effective and permanent transition from peacekeeping operations to peacebuilding initiatives, which helps build resilience and foster sustainable development in countries and their institutions. Given the huge peace and security challenges we now face, prioritizing conflict prevention is not just an option, it is an obligation. The concepts of peacekeeping and peacebuilding are perfectly in line with that important priority, and they have certainly caused a paradigm shift in the way we ought to address peace and security issues. It has been underscored time and again that peace and security, development and human rights are inextricably linked. Closer collaboration among the various organs of the United Nations and other stakeholders is therefore needed to build peaceful and inclusive societies.

Addressing institution-building and ensuring political and operational consistency throughout the United Nations system is therefore absolutely essential to ensure that conflict, peacekeeping and peacebuilding are priorities for the Organization as it conducts its work and activities. That is basically what the reforms of the Secretary-General seek to address, and the African members of the Security Council fully support the reform process under way. We also believe that the outcome of the reform will enable the United Nations to develop additional capacity to comprehensively respond to today's security challenges, including, inter alia, maximally reducing the duplication of structures and overlapping mandates and ensuring greater transparency and responsibility and better planning and budgeting. We think that it is important for the Security Council to understand the catalysing value of the Peacebuilding Fund.

Peacebuilding and peacekeeping are essential to the implementation of development programmes and sustainable peace and security on the African continent. In that regard, we commend and encourage the efforts that have been made on focusing on conflict prevention and post-conflict stablization, such as those of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework on Sustainable Development and Peace and Security and the subsequent memorandum of understanding between the African Union Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office. The implementation of

the Peace Fund by the African Union demonstrates the commitment of African countries to peace and security, both on the African continent and internationally. Due to the complex nature of conflicts, however, ensuring the maintenance of peace and conflict prevention in a sustainable manner requires international cooperation. Similarly, the United Nations cannot address the large number of international security challenges alone. In order to achieve the ultimate goal of establishing solid and lasting world peace, it is necessary to strengthen relations among diverse stakeholders, including regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions, national Governments, various civil society groups and private organizations, in all aspects of conflict cycles. It also entails prevention, peacekeeking, special political missions, conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

We take this opportunity to comend the work of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel in supporting regional strategies in the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin, as well as its work in the Great Lakes region. Accordingly, we propose considering similar initiatives in other areas of the continent that require them. Central Africa, for example, hosts two peacekeeping missions, and we have seen an increase in terrorist activity and transnational organized crime by armed groups, both on the ground and at sea, as well as incidents of violent extremism. We believe that the Central African region requires the same level of attention as other regions in Africa, so as to ensure cooperation to support peacebuilding. In that regard, we believe that one of the added values of the Peacebuilding Commission is to complement the reports of the Secretary-General by identifying blind spots and gaps in the implementation of regional strategies aimed at peacebuilding, as well as potential risks related to dedicating resources to a single region, country or initiative.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8302

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8302nd meeting
Friday, 29 June 2018, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Nebenzia	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Djédjé
	Equatorial Guinea	Mrs. Mele Colifa
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Mr. Lewicki
	Sweden	Mr. Öberg
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Clay
	United States of America	Ms. Tachco

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Special report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the strategic review of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2018/530)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

18-20334 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Special report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the strategic review of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2018/530)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2018/640, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/530, which contains the special report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the strategic review of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, France, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2425 (2018).

The meeting rose at 3.05 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8303

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8303rd meeting

Friday, 29 June 2018, 3.05 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Nebenzia	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Djédjé
	Equatorial Guinea	Mrs. Mele Colifa
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Duclos
	Poland	Mr. Lewicki
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Clay
	United States of America	Ms. Tachco

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for the period from 23 February to 23 May 2018 (S/2018/550)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

18-20340 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for the period from 23 February to 23 May 2018 (S/2018/550)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2018/647, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation and the United States of America.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/550, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for the period from 23 February to 23 May 2018.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, France, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2426 (2018).

The meeting rose at 3.10 p.m.

S/PV.8304

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8304th meeting
Friday, 29 June 2018, 3.10 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Nebenzia	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Djédjé
	Equatorial Guinea	Mrs. Mele Colifa
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Alahmad
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Duclos
	Poland	Mr. Lewicki
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Clay
	United States of America	Ms. Tachco

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Mine action

Report of the Secretary-General on a comprehensive approach to mine action (S/2018/623)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Mine action

Report of the Secretary-General on a comprehensive approach to mine action (S/2018/623)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Alexander Zouev, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/623, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on comprehensive approach to mine action.

I now give the floor to Mr. Zouev.

Mr. Zouev (*spoke in Russian*): A year ago, on 30 June 2017, the Security Council adopted resolution 2365 (2017), the first resolution on mine action (see S/PV.7992). At the same time, the Security Council acknowledged the threat created by explosive objects to civilians and peacekeepers, as well as the acute need to carry out mine action in order to mitigate the threat. With the framework of the Office for the Rule of Law and Security Institutions, the United Nations Mine Action Service, in coordination with bodies within the United Nations system as well as with entities outside the Organization, is implementing the resolution.

The report that we are discussing today (S/2018/623) contains a short overview of what we have achieved so far. It also describes the issues we are encountering as we carry out our mine action.

(*spoke in English*)

After years of decrease, casualty numbers from explosive hazards are on the rise again. Despite the clearance efforts of the United Nations, Member States and non-governmental organizations, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines recorded, in its latest annual report, over 8,500 casualties of mines, explosive remnants of war and victim-operated improvised explosive devices. Ongoing conflicts and the difficulty of access to contaminated areas during active combats are among the main causes of this unfortunate trend. The figure represents over twice as many victims as four years ago. Over 2,000 of those victims were killed, nearly a quarter of whom were children. Considering the difficulty of gathering data during active conflicts, it is likely that the actual number of casualties is much higher.

The clearance of landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices does more than just save lives. Mine action is a precondition for stabilization and peacebuilding — and, eventually, sustainable development — to take hold. Once explosive remnants of war are removed from critical infrastructure like hospitals, power plants and water-treatment facilities, rehabilitation and reconstruction of public services can begin.

The resulting opportunities for progress, in turn, increase the likelihood that peace can be sustained in the long term. Moreover, mine action helps prevent explosive material from being harvested for use by armed and terrorist groups, which makes mine action a vital element of the nexus between peace and security and development, and a cornerstone in preventing any relapse into future conflict.

The report before the Council today notes that mine action is critical to the safety, security and mobility of United Nations personnel. In 2017, 59 peacekeepers lost their lives through malicious acts involving the use of explosive devices, and 150 more were injured. Contexts like Mali and Somalia continue to be highly threatening environments for the safe conduct of Security Council mandates.

The Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative seeks to make our missions stronger and safer. We owe it to the personnel we deploy on the ground to provide them with the right training, knowledge and equipment to safely conduct the United Nations mandate. Raising awareness, training and building capacity to mitigate the threat posed by explosive weapons are critical aspects of this effort. Through their mine-action activities, peace operations also protect civilians and enable the delivery of humanitarian aid to those in need.

In armed conflicts, improvised explosive devices have become the main driver of increased deaths and injuries among civilians and peacekeepers. Peace operations are more effective, and lives are saved, when the threat posed by explosive hazards is considered from the earliest stages of planning and programming.

In his Agenda for Disarmament, which was launched last month, the Secretary-General called for a whole-of-system approach to this increasingly deadly threat. Under the leadership of the United Nations Mine Action Service, United Nations entities are working towards a more effective and integrated response. Troop-contributing countries, too, must step up their efforts to prepare peacekeepers for the threats they face in their deployments. The United Nations will continue to provide support to countries seeking to improve their national mine-action management. I greatly thank those Member States that have implemented measures to mitigate the risk to their citizens of explosive devices, including by acceding to or ratifying relevant international instruments.

(*spoke in French*)

Resolution 2365 (2017) has made mine action one of the main priorities for the Organization. As a vital element in the prevention of casualties and the maintenance of peace and security, it is precisely there — at the forefront of United Nations action — that mine action must remain. The increasing number of victims shows that we cannot afford to be complacent. On behalf of the Secretary-General, I urge Member States in a position to do so to provide sustainable, predictable and unearmarked funding to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action.

The annual review of mine action by the Security Council, based on a report on the implementation of the resolution, would continue to give due attention to the threat posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Mine Action Service of the Office of the Rule of Law and Security Institutions will be ready at any time to inform the Council on specific mine-action issues.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Zouev for his informative briefing. I suggest that he not stop at the three languages he just used and next time use at least four official languages of the United Nations.

I now give the floor to the members of the Security Council who wish to make a statement.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I will speak in only one of the official languages of the Organization.

Bolivia wishes to express its gratitude for the report presented by the Assistant Secretary-General for the Rule of Law and Security Institutions, Mr. Alexander Zouev (S/2018/623), and we also thank the President and the delegation of Russia for scheduling today's meeting.

Today marks one year since the adoption of resolution 2365 (2017) (see S/PV.7992), which, as the first Security Council resolution dealing with mine action issues, was a milestone. The report submitted by the Secretary-General in the framework of that resolution allows the members of the Security Council to take a comprehensive look at the threat that landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices pose to civilians during armed conflicts, and even many years after their conclusion. As an example, the report notes that, in Cambodia, despite the fact that the ceasefire was signed more than 25 years ago, 2017 was the first year in which there was a full month without any record of casualties due to landmines or unexploded ordnance.

Unfortunately, the number of victims of landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices continues to increase. In 2017, there were more than 8,600 victims, more than double the number in 2014. We must emphasize that the indiscriminate use of such devices disproportionately affects the civilian population, with frightening consequences, particularly for children, who are killed or maimed. This situation is exacerbated by the ongoing urbanization of conflicts.

Improvised explosive devices also have a negative impact on the performance of peacekeeping operations and pose an ongoing threat to the lives of their members and of humanitarian workers. By way of example, since the establishment of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali in 2013, the Mission has recorded more than 350 victims, 65 per cent of whom lost their lives due to improvised explosive devices. In addition to posing a threat to humanitarian workers, improvised explosive devices hinder the delivery of humanitarian assistance. They also limit the movement of internally displaced persons and restrict their return home.

Mine action is crucial to peacekeeping and peacebuilding, since programmes in those areas allow public services to be rebuilt, foster sustainable development and prevent weapons and explosive material from being used by armed groups and terrorist groups. For example, land is used for farming, children can return to school, and water and electricity can be restored only after an extensive clean-up operation. There is therefore an intrinsic link between mine action, security and development. It is for those reasons that we underscore the work conducted by the United Nations Mine Action Service in coordinating mine action in 17 countries, territories and peacekeeping missions and special political missions.

In the light of all this, mine action is key to protecting civilians, both during and after conflict. The implementation of resolution 2365 (2017) is therefore crucial, as it calls upon all parties to conflict to put an immediate and permanent end to the indiscriminate use of improvised explosive devices and protect the civilian population from the threats they pose. We also believe that it is necessary to continue including, where appropriate, the issue of mine action in the mandates of peacekeeping operations and special political missions. The issue of mine action should also be included in the earliest stages of mission planning, programming and operating concepts We also believe that mine action should be included, as needed, in the agendas of Security Council missions.

We also stress that a mine action component should be included in peacekeeping operations, special political missions and issues on the Security Council's agenda. For example, it should be recalled that improvised explosive devices must be removed in Iraq and Syria. The clean-up of areas contaminated with landmines is under way in Cyprus, Western Sahara and Abyei. Risk education programmes are being conducted in Somalia. The Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, signed in Colombia in 2016, recognizes the issue of demining as a precondition for post-conflict rural development. Following the exit of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, ammunition was destroyed, thereby enabling the civilian population to use areas formerly employed by those missions in discharging their duties.

Mine action should therefore continue to feature prominently on the Security Council's agenda. We underscore the recommendation of the Secretary-General, which encourages the Security Council to consider the issue through an annual report on the implementation of resolution 2365 (2017). To that end, in the weeks ahead, bearing in mind the input of today's meeting and the various statements made by delegations, my delegation will submit a request for an annual report on the topic. In addition to the request for an annual report, we believe it is important to delve deeper into the issue of mine action, given the Security Council's efforts in areas such as the protection of civilians, humanitarian action and the security of the members of peacekeeping operations, through the implementation of national mine action plans and the early inclusion of the issue of mine action in mission planning.

We take this opportunity to reiterate our call to all States party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and Their Destruction, known as the Ottawa Convention, to honour their obligations and unite efforts to ensure its full implementation. We call on all States that have not yet signed or ratified the Convention to join this important instrument.

In conclusion, we echo the words of Secretary-General António Guterres who said that peace without mine action is incomplete peace.

Mr. Lewicki (Poland): Let me to start by thanking the Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Alexander Zouev, for his very informative and thorough briefing. Let me also express our appreciation to the personnel of the United Nations Mine Action Service for its daily work to save lives.

Poland welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on a comprehensive approach to mine action (S/2018/623), which is indeed a useful source of comprehensive information on the scale of the current threat posed by mines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices. It enables the Security Council to gain thorough insight into the situation of civilians exposed to mine risk, including children, women, humanitarian personnel and peacekeepers. We agree with the Secretary-General's observation that the key role of mine action is sustaining peace. We therefore believe it critical to incorporate possible mine action from the earliest stages of planning and programming cycles when a threat occurs. We share the Secretary-General's views on the link between actions on the peace and stability and sustainable development

agendas. Only by integrating those areas through joint action can solid and durable solutions be accomplished.

Poland would like to underscore the crucial importance of promoting risk education activities among the affected populations, including youth and children, as well as constant support for the victims. Education is the key solution to minimize the risk of suffering of thousands of affected civilians. Last year, the adoption of the first stand-alone resolution on mine action was a clear sign of the concerns we all share about the serious threat to civilians, including children, humanitarian and medical personnel, posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices. Today we share that concern even more. The importance of resolution 2365 (2017) and its message must be emphasized. For Poland, as the European Union facilitator of a General Assembly resolution on mine action, the effective and coordinated engagement of the United Nations in that area is of utmost importance.

Regrettably, due to protracted active conflicts and fighting, there is an ever-increasing number of contaminated areas and the scale of a worldwide threat posed to the civilian population is very alarming. The number of casualties caused by mines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices increased more than twofold in 2017, compared to 2014. That statistic is terrifying. Afghanistan, Libya and Yemen are among those most severely affected by contamination, not to mention eastern Ukraine, where, a few months after August 2017, more than twice as many civilians were killed by remaining explosives.

On a positive note, the joint and coherent efforts of national and international actors can lead to results. We saw that in Colombia, where considerable progress in mine action has been achieved. Last year, we celebrated two important events. The first was the twentieth anniversary of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, which aims to put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines. We are very glad that in 2017 the number of States party to the Convention increased to an impressive 164. The second event was the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Mine Action Service.

We would like to reiterate our full recognition for the important role of the United Nations Mine Action Service since 1997 in mitigating threats posed by mines and associated remnants of war. Since 2015, Poland has regularly supported the activities of the United Nations Mine Action Service by making annual budgetary donations. We intend to continue that support this year.

In conclusion, Poland would welcome further Security Council discussions on mine action. We believe that countries should continue the practice of yearly reporting on the issue, which would contribute to the enhancement of all activities aimed at mitigating threats posed by contamination.

Mr. Duclos (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the convening of this meeting and the important briefing by Assistant Secretary-General Mr. Alexander Zouev.

Peru is a country committed to the elimination of anti-personnel mines, in accordance with the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction — also known as the Ottawa Convention. We believe that taking action against those weapons, which are particularly cruel, insidious and indiscriminate, constitutes a moral and legal obligation of the international community, which is called on to contribute directly to help the Council shoulder its responsibilities relating to the protection of civilians and the maintenance of international peace and security. Accordingly, we believe that it is important for this organ continue to focus on developments concerning mine action, especially in peacekeeping operations whose work in humanitarian demining is essential to fostering transitions from conflict situations to sustaining peace.

Based on our own experience in the area, we can give a first-hand account of the new peace dynamics that demining has created. Our armed forces today enjoy an exemplary relationship of trust and cooperation with those of our brotherly Republic of Ecuador in conducting joint demining activities on the shared border. Demining activities, outreach and prevention, and reparations and assistance provided to the victims of mines that the Peruvian State provided while combatting terrorism during the last decades of the twentieth century, have created today a positive relationship between the State and those communities most exposed to the violence at that time, in addition to opportunities for development, reconciliation and

the return of displaced persons that was facilitated by demining.

On the other hand, the continued presence of those weapons constitutes a remnant of conflict running contrary to international humanitarian law and tends to prolong conflict, especially among those who are most vulnerable. We underscore the importance of the planning and programming of mine action in close cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, local authorities, victims, humanitarian workers, civil society and those members of the population who risk being affected.

We would also like to highlight the work of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and the usefulness of the report of the Secretary-General on the issue (S/2018/623), in particular with regard to peacekeeping operations deployed through the Council's mandate. The cooperation of UNMAS with the various relevant United Nations system entities helps to develop capacities, common standards and synergies aimed at more effective, safe and efficient action on the ground. Furthermore, we believe that its work must go beyond the removal and the destruction of anti-personnel mines. In particular, we emphasize the need to support the establishment and strengthening of national capacities for demining, prevention and assistance to victims. Establishing a rapid response system to respond to anti-personnel mines wherever they might appear is also of particular importance.

In conclusion, we would like to highlight three points contained in the Secretary-General's report that we believe to be of major importance concerning peacekeeping operations deployed via the Council's mandate.

First, there is a need to provide missions with training, equipment and adequate technology and to facilitate the transfer of those capacities to the country affected. We commend the training that is being done. Secondly, there is a need to prevent and mitigate the destructive action of improvised explosive devices used by non-State actors, which today represent the greatest threat. We welcome the development of manuals to that end. Thirdly, it is advisable to increase women's participation in those activities, with a view to promoting prevention strategies and linking with civilian society more inclusively and effectively.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): I would like to begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on a comprehensive approach to mine action (S/2018/623) and Assistant Secretary-General Alexander Zouev for his briefing.

We note from the report of the Secretary-General that mines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) continue to cause widespread and indiscriminate injuries to civilian populations in various parts of the world, in both conflict and post-office situations. Of particular concern to us is the severe humanitarian consequences, including the loss of life, widespread suffering and its impact on humanitarian assistance, as highlighted by the Secretary-General in his report. We also note that the use of mines and IEDs and explosive remnants of war continue to hinder and obstruct the work of humanitarian actors, thereby affecting humanitarian assistance.

We are alarmed by the impact of landmines, IEDs and explosive remnants of war on peacekeeping missions, particularly in the context of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the African Union Mission in Somalia. For instance, it is seriously concerning to note that, according to the Secretary-General's report, MINUSMA has experienced its highest fatality rate since 2014. Comprehensive action to address the impact of mines, IEDs and explosive remnants of war requires a three-fold approach.

First, ensuring the full compliance with international humanitarian law of all parties to an armed conflict in their choice of weapons, including by ensuring strict compliance with the principles of proportionality, as well as distinctions, remains central. Parties to an armed conflict should take every necessary measure to protect civilians from the effect of hostilities, particularly by refraining from using weapons that could lead to an indiscriminate attack against civilians, such as mines and IEDs.

Secondly, we recognize that explosive remnants of war continue to be a serious humanitarian concern with devastating short- and long-term consequences on civilian populations, humanitarian actors and peacekeepers deployed in post-conflict situations. It is therefore critical to take concrete measures to address existing cases of contamination. In that regard, we welcome the measures taken by the United Nations Mine Action Service to reduce the impact of landmines, explosive remnants of war and IEDs on peacekeepers.

That takes me to my third point, on the impact of landmines, explosive remnants of war and IEDs on peacekeepers and the role of peacekeeping missions in addressing those challenges. We recognize that troop-contributing countries need to take every necessary measure to better prepare their peacekeepers deployed in conflict and post-conflict situations to respond to threats posed by landmines, IEDs and explosive remnants of war, including in the context of asymmetrical warfare. Equally important is the need to provide peacekeepers with the necessary capacity and force enablers to respond to the challenges faced by the use of such weapons by providing them with the necessary training and capability to protect themselves and civilians, as well as humanitarian actors.

I would therefore like to underscore the need to provide peacekeeping missions that are deployed and faced with risks associated with explosive remnants of war and IEDs with the proper training and the necessary capabilities that are critical in addressing the threat posed by explosive devices to peacekeepers, as identified by the Secretary-General in his report. Furthermore, as pointed out in the report prepared by Lieutenant General (Retired) Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, entitled "Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers", it is critical to fully equip such missions by providing them with appropriate mine-protected vehicles and specialized weapons ammunition and by including a small cell of military engineers who would supervise anti-IED planning or operation procedures. Concrete measures should also be taken to enhance the intelligence capabilities of such missions to detect IEDs.

As a follow-up of today's discussion, we encourage these issues to be taken up within the appropriate format. I would like to particularly welcome the proposal by the Secretary-General to mainstream mine action into relevant country-specific discussions and the planning and mandate of United Nations responses, as well as the inclusion of mine action into ceasefire and peace agreements, where feasible and appropriate. I would also like to lend my support to the proposal of the Secretary-General to consider the issue in the Council on an annual basis.

Mr. Tumysh (Kazakhstan) (*spoke in Russian*): As this is the last open meeting of the Council this month, I should like first to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the successful completion of your presidency of the Security Council. I would like to point out that you have been very skilful in steering our deliberations. I wish the Russian national team success in the FIFA World Cup, which has been so excellently organized in your country.

(*spoke in English*)

We thank the Russian presidency for bringing the issue of mines and explosives to the attention of the Security Council. We also express our appreciation to Assistant Secretary-General Zouev for his interesting, informative and comprehensive update.

(*spoke in Russian*)

We wish Mr. Zouev every future success in pursuit of the laudable purposes of the United Nations.

(*spoke in English*)

The contamination of mines and explosives, remnants of war and conflicts affects civilian populations, United Nations operations and global peace and security. The alarming rate of conflicts utilizing explosive devices necessitates a more robust response in order to provide urgent humanitarian mine action assistance. We are also witness to the growing use of improvised explosive devices by terrorist groups against civilians, our peacekeepers and humanitarian personnel, who must be protected from such tragedies.

Resolution 2365 (2017), ably introduced by Bolivia in June 2017, is of vital importance and is the first of its kind as a stand-alone resolution on mine action. It is a sine qua non for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Secretary-General's new agenda for peace. Therefore, we welcome the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/623) and encourage periodic updates on the status of efforts to address the hazards of mines and explosives, inter alia, in the form of annual briefings. Kazakhstan highly values the work of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and would like to make the following observations and recommendations.

It is important for all relevant stakeholders — Member States, United Nations regional and subregional organizations, and international partners — to streamline efforts to protect civilians and include mine action in their mandates and programmes. It is just as important to build national capacities through training and ensuring the availability of equipment by promoting effective partnerships at all levels. We urge the international community to support the multifaceted activities of UNMAS, an invaluable and efficient United

Nations entity for mitigating the devastation caused in conflict and post-conflict zones through mine action, mine clearance, rehabilitation and risk education. As a preventive measure, education about the risk, safety and identification of mines and improvised explosive devices is most essential at all levels and segments of society.

We welcome the work of UNMAS with female risk-education volunteers to spread lifesaving education to women, who play a critical role in instilling safe behaviour among their children and peers. Women and young people have proven to be great catalysts for change and action.

The high death toll among our peacekeepers due to landmines and improvised explosive devices dictates that ensuring their safety and security must be our priority. Consequently, it is essential to equip our peacekeepers and provide them with in-depth, comprehensive and appropriate training, both predeployment and during missions. We therefore welcome the fact that UNMAS has developed and is implementing a comprehensive framework to mitigate the threat of improvised explosive devices that has contributed to reducing the casualty rate. Member States should also support the mine action response of the United Nations through predictable, un-earmarked funding for the purposes of long-term planning and programming.

No discussion of mines would be complete without considering victims who must be given immediate medical attention, in addition to prostheses, long-term rehabilitation and reintegration into society. Reintegration should include vocational training and job opportunities to lead normal, productive lives.

Kazakhstan has considerable experience in mine clearance, having neutralized more than 4.5 million explosive devices in Iraq. My country has also developed and provided intensive specialized training to Iraqi security forces, thereby enhancing their capacity to counter the threat of mines and explosives. That, in turn, has also become an area of special expertise. In that connection, Kazakhstan has established and is constantly upgrading its national demining centre and its K9 centre.

Kazakhstan is engaged in improving existing legislation, enacting new laws and providing practical and technical support for the safe and proper storage of ammunition and mines, in strict adherence to established international regulations. We are also strengthening such initiatives regionally among our Central Asian neighbours in the region.

Lastly, we are committed to joining the multilateral effort, not only for the safety and security of civilians, but also to reinforce stability, to promote peace and to support the process of sustainable development.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Kazakhstan for the kind words addressed to our presidency and, obviously, for wishing our team success in the FIFA World Cup. Nonetheless, let us make sure that every game in the World Cup is crowned with success. May the strongest team win.

Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni (Sweden): I can only agree with you, Mr. President, on your last statement. But let me thank Assistant Secretary-General Alexander Zouev for his useful briefing today, as always. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his informative and comprehensive report (S/2018/623), which we welcome.

I would also like to acknowledge Bolivia's spearheading efforts in advancing this agenda through resolution 2365 (2017)last year and their commitment to keeping the Security Council's attention on this important issue. As we said at the adoption of resolution 2365 (2017) one year ago (see S/PV.7992), the terrible legacy of landmines and explosive remnants of war on the communities where they are found cannot be overstated. We commend the United Nations for all of its work on all aspects of mine action.

Together with countless community and civil-society groups, results are being achieved. Casualties from landmines have decreased in recent years and that is worth highlighting. At the same time, there is no room for complacency, as the number of casualties from improvised explosive devices, on the other hand, has risen sharply. These are generally used in conflict and post-conflict areas, including by non-State actors.

Sweden fully shares the concerns expressed over the serious post-conflict humanitarian and peacebuilding problems caused by explosive remnants of war. We need to do more to minimize their occurrence, effects and risks. In that context, it is worth recalling the significance of mine clearance in further enhancing the possibilities for peacekeeping operations to fulfil their work according to their mandates.

There is a growing awareness within the mine-action sector that including a gender perspective in activities will result in mine action having a greater

and wider impact. Women are often more inclined to share information on threats, and women and children often subject to risk from remnants of war in their daily activities. We note with satisfaction that the programme staff of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) is almost 50 per cent women.

All in all, Sweden has contributed over $100 million to mine action worldwide over the past decade. The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency is a stand-by partner to UNMAS and the International Committee of the Red Cross, and conducts humanitarian operations, including humanitarian mine action worldwide.

Sweden believes in an approach to disarmament and international security that puts human beings at the centre of its policy. Sweden is a State party to all relevant conventions banning or regulating the use of mines, anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions as well as the handling of explosive remnants of war. Sweden remains firmly committed to these Conventions and their full universalization, which is the most effective way to counter the risks associated with the use of such weapons.

Ms. Tachco (United States of America): I thank you, Sir, for convening today's meeting. I want to thank the Bolivian delegation as well for calling the Security Council's attention to this important issue. Of course I want to thank Assistant Secretary-General Zouev for his briefing to us here today. We hope that today's discussion will highlight the importance of mitigating the threats posed by mines and other explosive hazards as well as underline the potential life-saving impact of addressing this issue effectively.

The United States urges other Member States to join us in a robust international partnership to reduce the impact of unexploded ordnance, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and mines on the vulnerable communities around the world. As many have mentioned here, the clearance of mines, IEDs and unexploded ordnance plays an essential role in reconstruction and stabilization in many regions of the world. We remove explosive hazards in order to protect civilians to ensure a secure environment for the providers of a range of follow-on assistance and to clear the lines of transportation and communication for commerce.

In the international realm, the United States is the Chair of the Mine Action Support Group for the next two years. We will strive to increase donor participation and commitment to this very important work.

Protecting civilians from these weapons is a prerequisite for achieving lasting peace and stability. Whether it is children on their way to school, business men and women conducting trade and commerce, farmers cultivating their fields or shepherds tending their flocks, civilians must be protected from the risk of abandoned landmines and unexploded ordnance. As long as these types of dangers persist, affected communities will not fully recover from the remnants of conflict.

The United States has been the world's largest single donor and financial supporter of humanitarian mine action, providing more than $2.9 billion in aid for conventional-weapons destruction in more than 100 countries since 1993. This includes clearance of landmines and unexploded ordnance. In fact, the United States is more committed to conventional-weapons-destruction assistance now than we ever have been. Our State Department provided $179.5 million in conventional weapons destruction assistance in 2016, and we project the final contribution for 2017 to be $266.5 million, which is an unprecedented single-year investment. This assistance is not focused solely on clearance of explosive hazards, such as landmines, IEDs and unexploded ordnance; rather, the conventional weapons destruction programme provides the United States with a broader framework, with the flexibility to assist States with munitions management.

Around the world, stockpiles of excess poorly secured or otherwise at-risk conventional weapons remain a serious challenge to peace and prosperity. Poorly secured munitions are illicitly diverted to terrorists, armed groups and other destabilizing actors, threatening the lives of our citizens and those of our partners. Deteriorating or mishandled stockpiles could threaten to devastate nearby population centres. They can also prevent the safe use of land, which can suppress economic development and prevent displaced persons from returning home.

These programmes do not merely seek to protect civilians from the threat of unexploded ordnance; they also provide a vehicle to prevent the spread of disease, stave off starvation and provide a sense of hope and confidence for populations afflicted by these threats, so that they might more actively engage their communities and participate in their economies. Rapid stabilization assistance, critical to promoting security and securing peace dividends in a post-conflict environment, cannot

take place until IEDs, unexploded ordnance and other conventional munitions are removed safely and securely.

In conclusion, in the light of the unfortunately high number of armed conflicts today, conventional-weapons-destruction assistance will continue to play a critical role in our efforts to build a more peaceful, secure and prosperous world.

Mr. Djédjé (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): We thank the Russian presidency for convening today's important meeting, which gives the Security Council the opportunity to assess, one year after its adoption, the level of implementation of resolution 2365 (2017) on landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices. We also thank Mr. Alexander Zouev for his excellent briefing on the implementation of the resolution.

The remarkable progress made in recent years in mine action is to be welcomed and encouraged, as is the growing commitment of States to complying with mine-action standards. Indeed, 164 States are now parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. My country notes with satisfaction that some States have destroyed the remaining anti-personnel mines on their territories, thereby fulfilling their obligations under the Convention. My delegation also welcomes the inclusion of mine action at the heart of humanitarian action, peacebuilding and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It must be recognized that, despite the significant progress that has been made in this area, the common goal of achieving a mine-free world is far from being achieved and remains a major challenge for the international community. As highlighted in the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/623), the phenomenon remains a persistent threat to international peace and security, particularly for civilian populations and humanitarian workers, but also for peacekeeping forces deployed in conflict zones. Long after the end of hostilities, these explosive devices continue to kill and maim, making it impossible for refugees and internally displaced persons to return to their homes or to give them any hope of a return to normal life or post-conflict reconstruction. Furthermore, despite the decrease in threats caused by mines and explosive remnants of war, new threats have emerged, such as improvised explosive devices, obsolete and poorly managed stockpiles of ammunition, and the circulation of small arms and light weapons.

In the wake of the crisis in my country, Côte d'Ivoire, despite not having experienced the use of anti-personnel mines, decided to destroy its stockpile of anti-personnel mines — a total of 1,803 mines — in accordance with its commitments under the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel mines. The Ivorian Government has also decided to make the management and security of arms and ammunition stocks one of its priorities.

With the support of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and its Mine Action Service, Côte d'Ivoire has established weapons and ammunition storage sites that meet international standards, through the development of standards for the construction of weapons depots, the renovation of armouries and the construction of secure bunkers, in accordance with international standards. Similarly, a weapons-stockpile-management procedure manual and an ammunition-management guide have been developed to improve existing tools and systems. The authorities have also worked, in terms of capacity-building, on the technical training of persons in charge of depot management, and have set up a computerized database of weapons and ammunition. To date, Côte d'Ivoire can boast a marked and registered weapons rate of 95 per cent.

In the face of the worrying issue of mines and explosive remnants of war, Côte d'Ivoire calls for strengthened international cooperation among States with a view to eliminating the danger they pose to international peace and security. It encourages the implementation of international legal instruments related to mine action and urges ongoing collective efforts towards the universalization of such instruments. My delegation also believes that the elimination of the risks inherent in anti-personnel mines requires a holistic approach that involves both raising public awareness of the dangers posed by those devices and conducting the operations necessary to identify and remove them. That approach must also include victim assistance, weapons management, the destruction of arsenals, national capacity-building and the full implementation of Conventions prohibiting and regulating the use of anti-personnel mines.

My country also encourages States to implement programmes and policies on mine awareness, mine

clearance, mine risk education and victim assistance, based on the Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action 2013-2018. Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the inclusion of the issue of mine action when developing mandates for peacekeeping operations, special political missions and humanitarian and development programmes. In that context, we appreciate the key role played by the United Nations, including its Mine Action Service, and reaffirm the need for partnerships and cooperation among regional organizations, such as the African Union and the United Nations.

Lastly, Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the completion of the United Nations explosive ordnance disposal standards as an important step in adapting the response of the United Nations to the evolving mine threat.

In conclusion, my delegation believes that the struggle to eliminate the danger posed by mines and explosive remnants of war remains relevant to our shared efforts to promote peace and ensure development in the world. It is therefore important that the Security Council remain seized of the issue because of its implications for international peace and security and that the Secretary-General ensure that Council members are regularly informed of its progress.

Mrs. Mele Colifa (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me begin by congratulating Mr. Alexander Zouev on his excellent briefing on the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/623), which is of critical importance, and by wishing him every success in his work as Head of the United Nations Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions. We would also like to congratulate the members of the Council, united in our strong commitment to contributing actively and positively to the results and contributions that today's meeting hopes to achieve.

My brief statement on mine action focuses on the following reflections and observations.

First, landmines were created before the twentieth century, but their use did not become widespread among the many groups and armed forces until the Second World War. They were widely used in international and internal conflicts alike. Mines remain an ongoing threat to civilian populations even long after the cessation of hostilities. Similarly, unexploded ordnance — bombs, howitzers or grenades — and other ammunition that did not explode when it was employed continue to wreak havoc in post-conflict communities around the world and are likely to be even more numerous.

Secondly, the threat of the mines goes far beyond killing, maiming and injuring thousands of people every year, whether or not there is a conflict.

Thirdly, such weapons continue to have social, prolonged and, in many cases, serious economic and environmental consequences.

Fourthly, from 2002 to June 2003, thousands of landmine casualties were recorded in 65 countries, the majority of which — 41 — were at peace, not at war.

Fifthly, during a civil war in 1864, General William T. Sherman used words that subsequently became famous to describe the use of mines. Due to the brutality of their effects, he stated that their use was "not an act of war, but a homicide".

The international community must take into account the fact that in 1995 the United Nations declared that mines were "one of the most widespread, lethal and long-lasting forms of pollution we have yet encountered". In a conflict, it is impossible to accurately estimate the number of unexploded mines and ammunition. The threat posed by unexploded ordnance is therefore now a serious concern for the international community because of the humanitarian consequences, in particular of anti-personnel mines, and such consequences must be properly assessed.

Given that bleak backdrop, we would like to express our deepest gratitude and appreciation to our Bolivian colleagues for their valuable contribution in this field. Just a year ago, on its own initiative, the Council adopted resolution 2365 (2017), which, to our surprise, was the first international legal text dedicated to condemning and demanding collective and coordinated action against the indiscriminate use of such cowardly weapons.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea urges States, by mandate of the Security Council, to adopt the necessary regulatory mechanisms governing the use, possession and illegal trafficking of mines and other improvised explosive devices. It is essential to adopt joint strategies to ensure greater control and security at airports, ports, border posts and crossing points, roads and in communications among States. The goal is to better detect and confiscate improvised explosive devices and related materials in an effort to build a world that is safer, fairer, more peaceful, prosperous and, above all, respectful of societies so as to continue to ensure peaceful coexistence among peoples.

In conclusion, I would like to welcome and support the recommendations contained in a recent report of the Secretary-General, in which he requests a formal follow-up to the issue, with periodic reports on the status of the implementation of relevant resolutions. In that regard, Equatorial Guinea will seek to ensure that the issue is included on the Security Council's agenda.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): First, let me begin by thanking Assistant Secretary-General Zouev for his excellent briefing and leadership on the issue at hand. We commend you, Mr. President, on Russia's able presidency of the Security Council in June. Let me also thank Ambassador Llorentty Solíz of Bolivia for requesting today's meeting.

I will address three points: first, the threat of landmines; secondly, the United Nations and mine action; and thirdly, the role of the Security Council.

First, landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices pose a significant threat to the safety of civilians, parents and children alike, peacekeepers and humanitarian aid workers during conflict and long after it ends. The report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/623) highlights that it is truly a global concern. Afghanistan, Libya, Ukraine, Iraq and Yemen are among the most affected countries. It demonstrates the relevance of mine action for the Council's agenda. In places like Mosul, Iraq, urgent humanitarian action is hindered, which means that civilians cannot return to their homes. Indeed, the increased use of those types of explosives in urban and residential areas is alarming. Let us not forget that children are the leading victims of explosive remnants of war. That confers upon us a huge responsibilty.

That brings me to my second point — the United Nations and mine action. We commend the role of the United Nations Mine Action Service under the able leadership of Agnès Marcaillou. We see a clear connection between mine action and peacekeeping. We actively support the United Nations in modernizing peace operations through the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping process, which, as we all know, the Secretary-General launched here in the Council in March (see S/PV.8218). In that context, we highly favour the further integration of mine action into United Nations peacekeeping, and we look forward to working closely with Côte d'Ivoire in the coming months in that process.

At the same time, humanitarian space must be protected, and my country tries to help in that regard. We are sixth on the list of worldwide donors in humanitarian mine action. We are contributing €3 million of unearmarked funding to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund and an additional €45 million to humanitarian demining projects for the current four-year period. We cooperate in particular with non-governmental organizations. We commend them for their work in sometimes very dangerous circumstances. Let me mention them: the Mines Advisory Group, the HALO Trust and DanChurchAid. That is part of our multi-annual funding and multi-stakeholder collaboration approach, and we hope that other countries will approach mine action in a similar way.

We welcome recent accessions to the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction — also known as the Ottawa Convention — the Convention on Cluster Munitions and other instruments, but frankly speaking we continue to have a long way to go before all of them are universal. We therefore hope to see additional accessions to all the relevant instruments by this time next year.

That brings me to my third point — the role of the Security Council. We believe that it is important that the Council continue to consider mine action, which can be done both in country-specific debates and through mainstreaming mine action in peacekeeping mandates. Therefore, we support the Secretary-General's recommendations contained in his report. That includes urging troop-contributing countries to better prepare peacekeepers for the threats that they will face and including mine action in peace agreements and ceasefires. We are in favour of holding an annual debate on that subject in the Council. One year after the adoption of resolution 2365 (2017), the Council cannot become complacent.

In conclusion, mine action really is at the nexus of security, conflict resolution and development. Its ripple effects can carry a long way if we go about it in the right way. There is a clear humanitarian imperative. Mine action enables farmers to grow crops, parents to buy food for their children and their children to go to school.

Mr. Clay (United Kingdom): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Zouev for his briefing, and through

him I would like to extend the United Kingdom's appreciation for all the work carried out by United Nations staff working on mine action, especially in the United Nations Mine Action Service.

I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2018/623) on the implementation of resolution 2365 (2017). The United Kingdom reiterates its support for the resolution, in which, for the first time, the Council calls for action against the lasting threat posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) to civilians and peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel. Twenty years after the adoption of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, landmines remain a major threat. As discussed in the Secretary-General's report, landmines continue to kill and maim indiscriminately. It is civilians, and all too often children, who are the victims of those brutal weapons. Although a great deal has been done and achieved to rid the world of those horrific weapons, it is clear that more remains to be done.

The United Kingdom fully agrees that instruments of international law provide protection against the proliferation of explosive weapons. We remain fully committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which we chaired in 2017, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We call on all States not already party to those conventions to accede to those key international disarmament initiatives without delay. It is only when we stop producing those atrocious weapons, that people will stop being killed by them.

The United Kingdom will continue to uphold its own commitments under the Convention. We are working to clear landmines in the Falkland Islands, the only part of our territory that is contaminated with landmines. We are also proud to offer substantial international assistance. Last year, we tripled our funding for mine action and will spend $130 million over three years to tackle the humanitarian and development impact of landmines and other explosive remnants of war. That support is making 150 square kilometres of land safe, which will help 800,000 people and ensure that, every year, over 100,000 people — especially children — fully understand the dangers posed by landmines and how to avoid them.

We welcome the significant role played by the United Nations, in particular its focus on strengthening national capacity and the importance of partnerships. In support of that, we provide funding to the Voluntary Trust Fund of the United Nations Mine Action Service, and, through the United Kingdom military's Defence Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Munitions and Search Training Regiment, have supported the United Nations development of improvised explosive device disposal standards. We welcome the completion of those standards and recognize the role that they will play in ensuring the safety of United Nations personnel who take part in demining activity. As identified in the Secretary-General's report, there is an appalling trend of increased use of improvised explosive devices by non-State actors. The United Kingdom supports Resolution 2370, (2017), which restricts terrorist actors' access to weapons. We call for additional stringent national measures to deny terrorists ready access to weapons and explosive precursors. We also support General Assembly resolution 71/72, on countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices, the second of its kind.

International cooperation is vital to tackling the criminal and terrorist networks facilitating and using IEDs. The United Kingdom is actively engaged in facilitating discussions among the international community on the topic of IEDs and mine action. The conference that we hosted in May considered the challenges of realizing a mine-free world and looked at how we could overcome them. Much of the remaining clearance challenge stems from recent indiscriminate contamination by mines and IEDs. It is vital that we continue to assess the challenges ahead and collaboratively consider the means to meet such challenges. We must augment our efforts where we can so that we can collectively tackle the scourge of landmines.

Mr. Alahmad (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation for the valuable briefing by Mr. Alexander Zouev, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

We are discussing an extremely important topic today on the Security Council's agenda, as the issue of mines, explosive ordnance and improvised explosive devices is directly linked to the United Nations goal to maintain peace and security in armed conflict and dispute zones. Regrettably, since the United Nations began monitoring civilian casualties caused by such explosives and mines in 1999, statistics have shown an

increase in the number of civilian casualties resulting from the remnants of war and mines. It is truly saddening that children comprise the largest category of civilian victims of the remnants of war.

Our discussion today on mine action and warnings concerning their negative impact on civilians, especially in the aftermath of war, is of particular importance to the State of Kuwait because of its bitter experience following the liberation of the country from the Iraqi occupation, which in its wake left behind landmines throughout its territory, including on beaches and in vast expanses of desert, that have killed many civilians.

We commend all United Nations efforts to maintain peace and security among all conflicting parties, which is achieved through peacekeeping operations and the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, as well as efforts to arrive at settlements and confidence-building measures and limiting the deadly effects of landmines on the lives of civilians following conflicts.

Allow me in this regard to commend the heroic actions taken by more than 100,000 men and women in peacekeeping operations in different conflict zones, risking their lives in order to maintain and protect the lives of others, especially civilians, in extremely dangerous and complicated environments. We call for improving the preparation and performance of peacekeepers, who are operating in areas at high risk of explosives, so that they are better able to perform their duties and save their lives.

I would like to define three important measures that would alleviate the impact of landmines on civilians: first, to stop violence and conflict between armed groups; secondly, to facilitate restoring public services in post-conflict areas and promote the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals for establishing peaceful and conflict-free societies; and thirdly, to issue national laws which prohibit the possession of weapons and explosive materials.

We welcome measures to enhance partnership and cooperation between the United Nations and other States at the national and international levels in the field of mine action. Moreover, we commend the partnership established between the United Nations and the African Union Commission to manage mine action. I would also note the efforts made by the United Nations, in cooperation with the Government of Iraq, through joint programmes aimed at screening and clearing areas of mines in the liberated areas of Iraq. We also welcome the work being done between the United Nations and the Governments of Lebanon, Libya, Somalia and other Governments of Member States.

We condemn the use of landmines by the Houthis in Yemen. These landmines are being placed randomly, thereby endangering the lives of civilians, in clear violation of international humanitarian law.

In conclusion, I note that resolution 2365 (2017), which the Security Council adopted last year, represents a positive development in the efforts of the United Nations to combat the danger of landmines, explosives and improvised explosive devices remnants of war. I reaffirm that such efforts to stop the use of landmines will save the lives of many civilians and make an important contribution to achieving the desired security and peace. We support the recommendation of the Secretary-General to consider mine action on an annual basis in the Council.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting. We also thank Assistant Secretary-General Zouev for his briefing.

In recent years, thanks to the joint efforts of the international community, progress has been made in international mine action. The harrowing problems of landmines have been mitigated in some countries and regions. Last year, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2365 (2017), fully demonstrating the priority that the international community attaches to mine action.

China welcomes the Secretary-General's report to the Security Council on a comprehensive approach to mine action (S/2018/623). We also commend the efforts of the United Nations to address the threat of landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and encourage the United Nations to continue to play a major role in that regard. We believe that the Organization's efforts in this area are of great importance to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 and are also in line with the concept of a community of shared future for mankind that China has been advocating.

At present, dozens of countries throughout the world are facing the threat of landmines and other explosives. In certain countries and regions, local wars and armed conflicts have led to more suffering

caused by landmines, while IEDs have already become a tool for terrorists and extremists to spread terror and violence in recent years. Strengthening international assistance and cooperation in mine action will help to greatly reduce the threat posed by landmines and other explosives to civilian lives and property, safeguard peacekeeping missions and realize the SDGs.

China maintains that to strengthen international assistance and cooperation in mine action and to effectively mitigate humanitarian concerns related to landmines and other explosives, the international community should focus on the following four points. First, it is important to respect the differences among countries with regard to security environments and military strength by addressing the humanitarian concerns and legitimate national military and security needs in a balanced fashion. Secondly, it is imperative to fully take into consideration the national conditions and needs of landmine-affected countries and to provide them with assistance and cooperation based on the realities on the ground. Thirdly, we must build the capacities of mine-affected countries in order to enable them to transition from reliance on external assistance to self-reliance, for the most part. Fourthly, it is crucial to focus on improving the practical results of demining assistance and cooperation and to continue to find new avenues for international cooperation.

China has always paid great attention to the humanitarian concerns associated with landmines. As a past victim, we feel very strongly about the hardships of mine-affected countries. China has actively supported international legal instruments, including the Geneva Conventions and the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW), as well as resolution 2365 (2017). China is a high contracting party to the CCW and its five Additional Protocols. We faithfully fulfil our obligations under those instruments.

China has also actively participated as an observer in the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. China is firmly committed to the cause of international humanitarian demining assistance. China has offered demining assistance to more than 40 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America by providing demining equipment and personnel training.

In September 2015, at the seventieth session of the General Assembly, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced at the Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping that China would launch 10 demining assistance programmes within the next five years. All of those programmes have been implemented ahead of schedule. As we speak, China is hosting a humanitarian demining training workshop for Laos in Nanjing, China. In the second half of the year, we plan to train 80 Cambodian deminers in China. We will also donate humanitarian demining supplies to those two countries.

China attaches great importance to humanitarian concerns arising from the abuse of IEDs by non-State actors. We support efforts to find a reasonable and viable solution within the CCW framework. China strictly administers the production, sales, procurement, import and export, storage and transport of explosives through a series of laws and regulations. As an active participant in the development of the United Nations IED-disposal standards, China, with the assistance of the United Nations Mine Action Service, has co-chaired the Working Group with Belgium and has drafted some of its important chapters. We hope that the standards will help United Nations peacekeeping operations to improve their skills and ability to dispose of IEDs and that it will be used voluntarily by the international community as a reference.

As always, China stands ready to fulfil its international obligations and provide assistance to the best of its ability as people in mine-affected countries and regions strive to rebuild their homes. We join the international community in making our contribution to addressing the humanitarian concerns arising from landmines and other explosive devices.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Alexander Zouev for his briefing. I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting one year after the adoption of resolution 2365 (2017) on an important topic that deserves our attention and mobilization.

Unfortunately, my first comment is to recall that the state of affairs is indisputable. Anti-personnel mines, explosive remnants of war and cluster munitions remain a major threat to our security. To that, we must add the challenge of improvised explosive device

(IEDs), which are most frequently used by terrorists, and the very nature of the IEDs. The fact that they are homemade, using components that are freely available, makes this issue all the more difficult to address in international bodies. Since we renewed the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) only yesterday (see S/PV.8298), I am thinking specifically of the case of Mali, where the Blue Helmets have already paid a heavy price. I am also thinking of the Rohingya woman amputee who was the victim of an anti-personnel mine whom we met during the Council's visit to Bangladesh and Burma, and of the photos of shredded limbs and bodies that we were shown there. What these weapons have in common is that they blindly mow down adults and children, civilians and military, without distinction. They are actually one of the leading causes of civilian casualties in conflict and post-conflict areas, from Afghanistan to Colombia. That speaks to the breadth of this threat and the risks it brings nowadays, and France considers it a serious cause for concern that should continue to force us to act with more determination than ever.

Considering how serious these challenges are, in my second point I would like to echo the Secretary-General's call for strengthening our action to save lives. Needless to say, our action should be adapted each specific situation, because we are dealing with a complex range of weapons, with major consequences both for stabilization in general and post-conflict reconstruction, and they require targeted measures, which the international community should take action on on two levels.

First, we have to supply the means needed to work with the stakeholders on the ground, whether they are troops or specialized non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to fight this threat. They need operational means adapted to particularly tricky security conditions. In that regard, France would like to commend the outstanding work being done by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), in cooperation with other United Nations agencies. UNMAS, which is headed by my compatriot Agnès Marcaillou, is putting its unparalleled know-how at the service of the world's most vulnerable populations with a great deal of courage. I want to express our special gratitude to the responders on the front lines of this effort, the civilian and military deminers, for their tireless devotion at the risk of their own lives. It is their action that creates the security conditions that enable Blue Helmets to deploy, humanitarian personnel to reach the people in need and the people themselves to resume normal life.

It is also essential to assist States and their specialized agencies through various training and awareness-raising activities. The countries exposed to these threats must be able to develop their own expertise so that they are no longer dependent on assistance locally from foreign and international teams. Among other things, we should focus on educating local populations about the risks.

My third point has to do with France's efforts to combat the problem of mines. We focus particularly on backing efforts to reform the security apparatus of a number of partner States, train national bodies and support partners deployed in the countries concerned. Following the example of Handicap International, these NGOs are doing an admirable job. With a view to achieving stabilization, France is supporting specialized training in a mainly humanitarian context in a number of countries emerging from crisis. In close partnership with the relevant stakeholders, we are supporting demining programmes, particularly in the Middle East and Africa, for example through such regional initiatives as the Humanitarian Demining Training Centre in Benin.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize that it is only through united action and better cooperation that we will succeed in effectively combating the threat posed by mines. It is our responsibility to intensify our efforts and strengthen their coherence in order to minimize the bleeding that these deadly devices cause. The complexity of the threat demands that multiple actors come up with a coordinated response based on the diverse kinds of expertise and resources of each. The example of the Mine Action Support Group should inspire us in that regard. Increasing our cooperation also means working to universalize and fully implement the legal tools at our disposal, especially the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, which is our basic instrument in the fight against anti-personnel mines, and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Many countries share the objectives of these Conventions even if they are not yet signatories to them, and France encourages all who have not yet done so to accede to them. Together with the European Union, we stand ready to give them concrete support in that process.

I would like to end by congratulating Russia for its effective presidency of the Security Council this month.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I will now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation.

We would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Alexander Zouev for his substantive briefing. We believe it is very important to be kept regularly informed by the Secretary-General about the United Nations bodies specializing in mine action, in accordance with resolution 2365 (2017), and we see his report on a comprehensive approach to such action (S/2018/623) as one of the steps being taken to implement the disarmament agenda. We note his efforts to maintain a neutral, impartial and balanced approach in the report that uses the facts to reflect the major measures taken under United Nations auspices in 2017 in the area of demining and clearing land of anti-personnel mines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

However, among the report's significant trends, there is a notable overemphasis on the humanitarian risks associated with the threat of mines in Syria and eastern Ukraine. We were also sorry to see that there was no reflection in the report of Russia's mine action efforts. As one of the most active participants in the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, Russia makes a significant contribution to international efforts to reduce the threat of anti-personnel mines, explosive remnants of war and IEDs based on implementing resolution 2365 (2017), on which we present annual national reports. In 2016 and 2017 a mine-clearance unit from the Russian Armed Forces' International Mine Action Centre conducted four humanitarian demining operations in Syria, two in Palmyra's historic architectural complex and in the residential part of the city, and two in Aleppo and Deir ez-Zor, clearing a total of 6,500 hectares of land, 1,500 kilometres of roads and more than 17,000 buildings. They detected and rendered harmless 105,000 explosive remnants of war, including more than 30,000 homemade explosive devices. The Russian Armed Forces' systematic efforts to eliminate the threat of IEDs in Syria represents our practical contribution to implementing the related General Assembly resolution 72/36.

Russia actively promotes technical, consultative and operational capacity-building for mine clearance. At our International Mine Action Centre, we train specialists in the areas of mine clearance, the detection and neutralization of IEDs, the operation of mobile robotic complexes, and mine detection services. The Centre is also open to exchanging professional experience with all interested parties. In 2017, for instance, it trained 207 Russian officers and 36 foreign military personnel. The opening at the end of 2016 of a branch of the Centre in Aleppo was an important step that has already put more than 1,000 demining specialists for the Syrian Armed Forces through sapper school. I would like to point out that the Syrian sappers trained at the Russian Centre have been supplied with modern technical detection and protective equipment for explosive objects and are already taking part in demining parts of eastern Ghouta, the southern suburbs of Damascus, eastern Qalamoun and Homs.

The Russian Federation's efforts are crucial to restoring the infrastructure necessary for returning refugees and temporarily displaced persons to their homes. Notably, that approach is recognized in the Secretary-General's report. However, while where the situations in Darfur and Iraq are concerned it describes on the specific work being done, the report on Syria is limited to mentioning the task to be done and then moves immediately to the difficulty of access. Russia's mine action efforts show clearly that the problems have nothing to do with access. In our view, the involvement of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in the efforts in Syria has been unjustifiably long drawn out. And the problem is not just to do with an unresolved issue with the Damascus Office and the Head of UNMAS, but also with something we are all too familiar with, the politicization of humanitarian issues by potential donors who do not want to contribute to normalizing life in Syria.

In conclusion, I would like to note that the Russian Federation gives significant attention to the development of international cooperation on mine clearance. In October 2017 and May 2018, engineers from the Russian Armed Forces held two international conferences on humanitarian demining in which delegations from 24 countries took part. We are continuing our close interaction with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. Russian experts took part in efforts organized by the United Nations Mine Action Service to prepare international standards for countering IEDs.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to Mr. Zouev.

Mr. Zouev (*spoke in Spanish*): We have taken detailed notes on the important comments and recommendations that Council members have made today, and we will be implementing them in our mine action efforts in future. We will also definitely take note of the President's recommendation to use more of the official languages of the United Nations, and more than the three that I have used in my briefing today. In that regard I would like to point out that last June, during Bolivia's presidency, when I had the honour of representing the Secretary-General at the meeting (see S/PV.7992) at which the Council adopted its historic resolution 2365 (2017), I used four of the official languages, including Spanish, which, unfortunately, is not my best.

The President: I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Zouev for his vast polyglot skills. We are looking forward to having him in the Council more often. There are still two more languages that he should be able to master, and next time we will hear his briefing in all the official languages of the United Nations.

(*spoke in Russian*)

Since this is the last meeting of the Security Council for the month of June — at least I hope it is — before adjourning it, on behalf of the delegation of the Russian Federation, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the members of the Council, especially my colleagues the Permanent Representatives, their mission staffs and the secretariat of the Council for all the support that they have given us, and also for the kind words I have heard today for our presidency. It really was a busy month, in which we managed to reach a consensus on a number of important issues within our remit. We could not have achieved those results alone or without the hard work, support and constructive contribution of every delegation and the representatives of the Secretariat, as well as all the conference staff, the interpreters and translators, the verbatim reporting service and the security staff, for which I want to thank them sincerely.

Our presidency is coming to an end and I am sure that the members of the Council will support me in wishing the Swedish delegation luck in July. I hope this official football, which has been our guiding light for half of our presidency, will bring luck to the Swedish delegation and will also remain on the table, according to the agreement reached with the Swedish delegation, until the end of the FIFA World Cup. We wish the delegation of Sweden success with the presidency of the Security Council and the Swedish national team success on the World Cup football field, and many thanks to all.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.